



Pacific Islands Forum (PACIF)

MUNUC 33

ONLINE



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Pacific Islands Forum, our committee for MUNUC XXXIII Online. My name is Joseph Pinto and I will serve as your chair. I am from Delaware (though I spent most of my childhood in Massachusetts), and at the University of Chicago I am a second-year double majoring in Chemistry and Math with a specialization in Economics. My MUN experience includes assistant chairing for a crisis committee—Obama 2008—at MUNUC 32 and preparing to be an assistant chair for the Virgin Group crisis committee at ChoMUN 23. I also chaired a virtual committee at WeMUN this past summer. Additionally, I participated in Model UN in high school, so I know what it's like to be a delegate! Outside of Model UN, I'm a math tutor at the Neighborhood Schools program, helping out at a local high school. I'm also incredibly interested in energy policy, and worked this summer at a DC-based think tank researching nuclear energy policy.

In this committee we will tackle the most pressing issues facing the Pacific Islands. Our first topic is about the environment. While climate change and similar unsustainable environmental practices are existential threats to the entire world, small island nations will perhaps be the first to feel their effects. The Forum must develop plans to mitigate the effects of climate change while bolstering an economy that does not over-depend on a certain resource. Our second topic is about mobility and how it relates to the economic growth of Pacific Islands. Limited natural resources and few opportunities for business means that Pacific Islanders do not have many options for elevating themselves from poverty. The Forum must consider how to optimize the movement of labor in and around Pacific Island countries to yield sustainable economic growth. These are incredibly difficult questions that cannot be reached through simple solutions. Well-researched ideas and copious debate are necessary to find solutions to the problems facing the Pacific Islands.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions about the committee. You can reach me at usg.rb@munuc.org. I look forward to seeing all of you in committee!

Best,

Joseph Pinto

Chair, PIF

LETTER FROM THE CRISIS DIRECTOR

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Pacific Islands Forum at MUNUC 33 Online! My name is Josh Quirk, and I will be serving as the crisis director of this committee. I hail from Middleton, Massachusetts, and I am a second year at the University of Chicago planning to study Political Science and Spanish. At MUNUC 32 I served as an Assistant Chair for the United Nations Security Council, and I also tutor at UC Woodlawn as a part of our CHPMUNC program. In addition to my MUNUC responsibilities, I am involved with our collegiate Model UN conference (ChoMUN), having served as an AC last year as well as being an Experienced AC for ChoMUN's upcoming conference. This past summer, Joseph and I co-chaired the UNSC committee at the virtual WeMUN Expo. I also work for Jumpstart as a mentor in the Chicago Public School system, sit on the Leadership Corps of UChicago's Neighborhood Schools Program, and play club soccer.

In our committee, delegates will be tasked with approaching complicated topics and discussions with grace, compassion, and intention. Due to the remoteness, scarcity of resources, and emphasis on tradition characteristic of the Pacific Islands, coming up with solutions to either of the topics which we have prepared will be difficult. Moreover, dealing with unrelenting political, cultural, and environmental problems alike will require both immediate solutions as well as a prioritization of the long-term stability of Pacific nations and the safety of their citizens. I will include crisis elements in one committee session as a means to reflect the tenuous and pressing nature of the problems which befall the Pacific as well as to liven up your debate.

Feel free to email me at usg.rb@munuc.org if you have any questions in advance of the conference. I look forward to seeing the solutions which you all present at conference!

Best,

Josh Quirk

Crisis Director, PIF

HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is guided by a vision for peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity for all Pacific people. Founded in 1971, it comprises 18 members: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The Forum meets to discuss key strategic issues surrounding all Pacific people, and emphasizes fostering cooperation between governments, collaboration with international agencies, and sovereign interests of its members. Ultimately, the Forum seeks to promote regionalism in the Pacific, which is the expression of a common sense of identity and purpose that leads progressively to improvement in all sectors for all parties involved. The Forum also makes sure its decisions are supported by nearby countries, so, since 1989, it has recognized 18 dialogue partners: Canada, People’s Republic of China, Cuba, European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. During the PIF, meetings are held between these dialogue partners and the PIF members to ensure a successful, collaborative resolution to the issues discussed.

STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEE

As mentioned briefly in my letter, one session of our committee meetings will be dedicated to crisis elements. This single-session crisis will feature modified note writing, so accelerated crisis arcs will be possible. Generally, a crisis arc entails a delegation slowly building up resources and alliances over several committee sessions by writing notes to their home government or potential allies in order to eventually execute a larger plan. In our committee, this process will take place in only one session, and thus I will be somewhat lenient with granting resources and allowing plans to be carried out more quickly. However, crisis arcs will still require the acquisition of necessary resources and alliances, and the quality of note writing will affect the likelihood of your plan becoming a part of frontroom debate and the potential resolution.

Moreover, I will be implementing an additional backroom mechanism throughout committee. During GA sessions, periodic updates will take place that will push delegates to consider all sides of an issue about which they are debating. These updates will take the form of brief messages from one or multiple of the Pacific Island Forum's 18 dialogue partners, with whom the PIF meets once a year and cooperates with on many initiatives. The dialogue partners might address a proposed solution with which they disagree or ask that delegates consider a particular problem in order to gain their support. Any update given during the GA sessions by the dialogue partners will not require delegates to respond through directives. The purpose of these updates from dialogue partners is to make delegates think of another perspective, a possible solution, and to liven up debate if needed.

Best,

Josh

TOPIC A: OCEAN CONSERVATION, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Statement of the Problem

Introduction to the problem

In the Pacific Islands, economic and cultural interests are intertwined as they are linked by a mutual connection with the ocean and its resources. The inhabitants of the Pacific rely largely on fishing and tourism as sources of their livelihood as these industries account for a significant proportion of the **GDP of Pacific Island Countries (PIC)**. Anywhere from 30 up to 100 percent of the revenue of several island nations comes from tuna licenses.¹ The member states of the PIF all have a close relationship with the ocean, which forms much of the independent economies of the island nations as well as their trading economies. Their **fisheries** are also essential to the global economy, especially the tuna industry, due to the rise and popularity of sashimi.² The Pacific Ocean itself is the largest body of water in the world and comprises the majority of the region, as well as provides food security, jobs, a means of transport, and tourism. The Pacific Ocean also offers opportunities that are relatively untapped by the Pacific Island community, such as offshore oil and gas fields, deep sea minerals, and alternative energy sources.³

In recent years this lifestyle has become littered with roadblocks, the most severe of which is climate change. The effects of climate change disproportionately impact the Pacific Islands. While higher-income countries have more resources to harness wind and solar power, the Pacific Islands do not have the financial means for mitigation of these effects nor the requisite alternative economic and societal structures to minimize the worsening of the situation. Pacific Islanders have often been

¹"Tuna-dependent Pacific Island States and climate change," Conservation International, Accessed May 21, 2020, https://www.conservation.org/docs/default-source/publication-pdfs/tuna-dependent-pacific-sids-fact-sheet.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=81976406_2.

²"Regional Information on Pacific Island Fisheries," Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Accessed May 21, 2020, <http://www.fao.org/3/ac682e/ac682e05.htm>.

³Bardach, John E, Charles Henry Cotter, and Joseph R Morgan, "Pacific Ocean - Deep-sea minerals," Britannica, Accessed May 21, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Pacific-Ocean/Deep-sea-minerals>.

forced to neglect long-term solutions and instead chose temporary ones. However, as the effects of climate change worsen and become more evident, the need for lasting solutions is apparent.

Effects of Natural Disasters and Climate Change

Climate change causes extreme weather patterns, which have been largely determined as foregone conclusions. Trends over the past years have shown significant increases in temperatures as well as in the frequency of natural hazards.⁴ Heatwaves, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and cyclones are just some of the scourges that stem from climate change. For the island nations of the Pacific region, most of which are tiny in size, the devastation as a result of these natural hazards is enormous. In 2009-10, it was estimated that cyclone losses equaled between 20 and 30 percent of the region's total GDP. For instance, Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016 cost an estimated \$1.4 billion in damage in the nation of Fiji, which equates to more than a third of its total GDP.⁵ Moreover, these cyclones have become more frequent and more powerful lately, indicating that their effects will only grow in magnitude as individual cyclones have cost billions in damage.⁶ Rising sea levels and the subsequent loss of land mass have both begun to threaten the Pacific Islands. Some researchers believe that the media must become more transparent about these devastating climate change effects in order for there to be lasting progress with regard to the topic of climate change.⁷



⁴Singh, Shailendra and Vijay Naidu, "Coverage of extreme weather events and natural hazards in Pacific island countries: The need for media capacity-building," *Pacific Journalism Review* 24, no. 1 (2018): 87-101, <https://www-scopus-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85050489211&origin=inward&txGid=d38a04e840e19750fa462ad3229abbd6>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Climate change also impacts the marine life that is essential for the survival of Pacific Islanders. Based on predictions, between 50 and 80 percent of the fish population in the Pacific region will be lost by the end of the century due to climate change.⁸ In particular, the crucial tuna population would be reduced and tuna fishing licenses would become less valuable. The water is becoming warmer and less habitable for marine species since they are used to consistent year-round temperatures which are attributed to the Pacific. Drastically changed conditions would shock the marine ecosystem and lead to extinction and mass migration, and thus less **biodiversity**.⁹ As a result of a decrease in biodiversity, crucial species for cultural ceremonies, trade, and many livelihoods could significantly lessen in number, migrate elsewhere, or become extinct. As the Pacific community relies heavily on these marine species for food security as well as economic prospects, such severe changes threaten the region.

Economic Overdependence

The Pacific Islands region also has a history of an overreliance on certain industries and resources, which has become dangerous due to unsustainable practices and climate change alike. For instance, tourism is crucial in the region and constitutes up to 70% of the GDP of some Pacific nations.¹⁰ Climate change threatens this crucial revenue source as its effects make the Pacific islands less attractive as tourist destinations.

In addition, there is a huge overreliance on coastal fisheries and their tuna output as an economic and food source. Fish constitutes between 50 to 90 percent of dietary protein for Pacific communities, and half of all families in the region rely on fishing as a source of income.¹¹ Fishing license fees are also crucial for the GDP of these nations.¹² This dependence has become

⁸"Pacific Island countries could lose 50 - 80% of fish in local waters under climate change," Nippon Foundation-Nereus Program, November 15, 2017, <https://phys.org/news/2017-11-pacific-island-countries-fish.html>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰Coelho, Sabira, "How Climate Change Affects the Pacific," Migration Data Portal, September 19, 2019, <https://migrationdataportal.org/blog/how-climate-change-affects-pacific>.

¹¹Howes, Ella L, Silvana Birchenough, and Susana Lincoln, "Effects of Climate Change Relevant to the Pacific Islands," Pacific Marine Climate Change Report Card: *Science Review* (2018): 1-19, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/1_Climate_change_overview.pdf.

¹²"Tuna-dependent Pacific Island States and climate change," Conservation International, Accessed May 21, 2020, https://www.conservation.org/docs/default-source/publication-pdfs/tuna-dependent-pacific-sids-fact-sheet.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=81976406_2.

unsustainable in part due to misguided practices such as overfishing, pollution, and the overpopulation of islanders in certain areas. While these unsustainable choices must be adjusted, the primary cause of the uncertain future for the Pacific with regard to economic dependence on fishing continues to be climate change. The overall output and contributions of the region's fisheries are expected to decrease, and even in areas where overfishing has not been problematic, climate change will reduce annual catch rate significantly.¹³ Fishing licenses in the region will become less desirable, and the previously abundant stock of fish will dwindle, jeopardizing food security and trade relationships. The rises in sea level, salinity (the amount of salt content in the ocean), and acidity, all put seawater resources in danger, and it is surmised that **invasive species** could become more adapted to the new conditions than essential local ones.¹⁴ As the coastline and coral reefs begin to erode and degrade, habitats for local species are diminishing. Even if the reefs manage to survive, the marine ecosystem will be wildly changed and local fishing knowledge reduced.¹⁵



Some research has been conducted that considers the effects of climate change on the future of local communities specifically. The major services, settlements, and industries of the region are all coastally located, which makes them especially vulnerable to erosion and rising sea levels.¹⁶ The degradation of essential social and economic systems and resources makes the population feel less secure. Polls in **atoll** nations indicate that a majority of citizens believe they would migrate from the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴Howes, Ella L., Silvana Birchenough, and Susana Lincoln, "Effects of Climate Change Relevant to the Pacific Islands," Pacific Marine Climate Change Report Card: *Science Review* (2018): 1-19, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/1_Climate_change_overview.pdf.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

region should sea levels and flood frequency continue to rise and the fish population continues to lessen; mass migration would doom the region and its culture.¹⁷

Threats to Culture, History, and Livelihood

Each Pacific island nation is unique, but they share a common concern for and ancestral connection with the environment. Despite cultural change and urbanization over the years, a reverential connection with the ocean and the past are being revitalized. Navigation over the sea is considered an art, and the youth continue to be taught lessons of culture and values from voyaging.¹⁸ Luxury products often include natural objects such as pearls and feathers.¹⁹ The mastery of the ocean and adaptation to the Pacific environment are considered culturally significant, a designation which is supported by one of the region's earliest art forms, the wooden navigation chart.²⁰ In addition, conservatism with regard to natural resources is valued highly, and similarly sustainable techniques to create tools are used across the entire region.²¹

As coastal cities and principal economic processes slowly erode and urbanization undermines societal customs, Pacific communities are in danger of severe degradation of their culture. For some scientists, the only solution to climate change is relocation, which would upend the practices and traditions that connected Pacific natives to the region.²² Moreover, the destruction of cultural resources, including artifacts that have historical significance as well as other remains of ancient settlement, would blot already underrepresented Pacific communities from history.²³

Current Situation

¹⁷Coelho, Sabira. "How Climate Change Affects the Pacific," Migration Data Portal, September 19, 2019. Accessed May 21, 2020. <https://migrationdataportal.org/blog/how-climate-change-affects-pacific>.

¹⁸Kiste, Robert C, Robert Carl Suggs, and Miriam Kahn, "Polynesian culture - Traditional Polynesia," Britannica, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Polynesia/Traditional-Polynesia>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰"Navigation charts," Khan Academy, Accessed May 21, 2020, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/pacific-apah/micronesia-apah/a/navigation-charts>.

²¹Kiste, Robert C, Robert Carl Suggs, and Miriam Kahn, "Polynesian culture - Traditional Polynesia," Britannica, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Polynesia/Traditional-Polynesia>.

²²Fitzpatrick, Scott, "The Pacific Islands: At the Confluence of Cultural Preservation and Climate Change," Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, February 20, 2018, <https://www.georgetownjournalofinternationalaffairs.org/online-edition/2018/2/20/the-pacific-islands-confluence-of-cultural-preservation-and-climate-change>.

²³ Ibid.

It is clear that climate change, as well as overdependence on certain resources and practices, contribute to the degradation of Pacific culture and possible extinction. This committee must find both long and short-term solutions since the crisis is imminent, but only forward-thinking plans will suffice.

History of the Problem

Introduction to the Problem's History

The environmental problems that the Pacific Islands face today are a product of years of negligence and erosion. However, the history of these problems has only been thoroughly documented recently as more knowledge has been acquired and more research conducted. Despite increased awareness about the factors which are contributing to the perilous condition of the Pacific Island region, a combination of unavoidable environmental factors, as well as erroneous policy decisions, have contributed to the problems in the Pacific.

History of Climate Change Research

While climate change has progressed gradually over time, studies of its indicators and effects have become a more recent focus of research. The United States sponsored much of the early climate change research, beginning with the Global Change Research Act of 1990, which mandated that research on global warming be continuously conducted and reported back to Congress every four years.²⁴ This has led to significant new knowledge about the effects of climate change in the Pacific.

The Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment (PIRCA), which details climate change indicators in US-Affiliated Pacific Islands, is one of the results of this initiative.²⁵ Their assessment from 2012 is a comprehensive report of the indicators of global warming as well as the projected effects of these measures on ocean resources as well as Pacific communities.²⁶ Since climate change research has such a short history, reports such as this one were crucial for the purpose of increasing awareness of the need for new preventative and long-term policy solutions. In the report, climate change indicators affecting the Pacific - such as decreasing rainfall, rising sea levels, changing habitat and species distributions, and more frequent but shorter periods of drought - are highlighted.²⁷ Just like this US-sponsored assessment, most climate change research is geared towards predicting trends,

²⁴ "S. 169 (101st): Global Change Research Act of 1990," Govtrack, 1990, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/101/s169>

²⁵Keener, Victoria W et al, "Climate Change and Pacific Islands: Indicators and Impacts," Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment (PIRCA), 2012, <https://www.cakex.org/sites/default/files/documents/Exec-Summary-PIRCA-FINAL2.pdf>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

as well as future changes, and determining how they can be prevented. While tracing climate change effects backwards is important, projecting them forwards is just as important. This report concluded that freshwater shortages, coastal flooding and erosion, coral death, negative consequences for the marine ecosystem, and more difficult maintenance of Pacific culture all will occur due in the wake of climate change.²⁸

Historically Inadequate Governmental Response

Additionally, research has revealed that the Pacific islands suffer from a unique geographical propensity to severe climate change effects, one of which is a more frequent exposure to natural hazards.²⁹ Due to the remoteness and inaccessibility of the islands, disaster prevention is difficult and emergency resources are hard to distribute. Moreover, hazard protection measures are expensive for poorer island nations.³⁰ These restrictions have led to poor planning, a lack of monitoring and surveillance for disasters, a lack of recordkeeping of historical events, and minimal media coverage for the ongoing natural hazards in the region.³¹ This history of insufficient responses and resources, along with a regional dependence and even complete subsistence on natural resources, entail that disasters threaten the entire economic fabric of PIC. Disaster management measures and hazard prevention plans which other nations have implemented have not been executed in the Pacific, either due to their imposition on cultural sites, the accessibility of the region, or the lack of definitive scientific evidence.

Years of often self-inflicted domestic issues have also contributed to the current problems in the Pacific. In Kiribati, for example, a combination of poor waste disposal and overpopulation have led to a limited supply of freshwater and water pollution.³² Instead of instituting effective trade and energy policies, Pacific governments tend to extract their very finite natural resources unsustainably, leading in many cases to overlogging and overfishing. Moreover, certain industries such as mining,

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Goff, James R. and James P. Terry, "The special vulnerability of Asia-Pacific islands to natural hazards," *Geological Society, London, Special Publications* 361, no. 1 (2012): 3-5, <https://sp.lyellcollection.org/content/specpubgsl/361/1/3.full.pdf>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Gay, Dan, "The untold story of the Pacific Islands," *The Guardian*, November 20, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/nov/20/pacific-islands-energy-environmental-problems>.

which has been supported by Pacific governments, have resulted in irreversible environmental damage. In 1999, BHP, a mining company, admitted that their copper and gold mines caused serious environmental devastation - pumping waste into the water, displacing thousands of citizens, and destroying crops and marine populations - in Papua New Guinea.³³ However, this obvious danger was insufficiently dealt with as the government of Papua New Guinea opted to nationalize the mine with the purpose of receiving more financial compensation for the government but without a direction for the future.³⁴ These examples reflect the types of weak governance and domestic problems which have plagued the Pacific over the years.

Foreign Dependence

An overdependence on foreign countries and a lack of government resources have led to an inability to create domestic regulations or effective policies. The Pacific ideology of minimizing the role of the state and lowering public funding is also fueled by foreign agencies looking to profit. Pacific Islanders are the highest recipients of aid in the world, receiving over 20 times the world average per capita: almost \$500 per person, according to the World Bank in 2011.³⁵ This reliance fosters uncertainty, since funding is often promised but not provided promptly or at all. Promises of the private sector taking charge of the environment from big donors and businesses, such as the Asian Development Bank in the late 20th century, led to cuts in public spending and extensive privatization, which devastated Vanuatu's economy.³⁶ Moreover, the lack of any form of energy policy in Vanuatu allowed Suez Unelco, a French energy company, to stake its claim for several decades and create a monopoly in the country, leading to high energy prices and an extreme reliance on imports. Furthermore, Suez Unelco won't support any companies which are implementing sustainable energy sources based in solar or wind power.³⁷

Foreign aid typically focuses on temporary economic measures, whereas it should also support other institutions such as health and education systems. The long-term effect of aid on countries such as the Federated States of Micronesia, which is overly dependent on the United States, is that their

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

economy is beyond repair without continued external aid.³⁸ Moreover, foreign involvement can subvert the existing political and economic structures of Pacific nations, allowing a small group to establish themselves as powerful elites within institutions that foster exclusivity.³⁹ These are the types of political and economic problems which local governance, and an overreliance on foreign aid, have brought about.

The Study of Conservation

Ocean conservation as an area of study, now one of the most common influences on policy to combat environmental threats in the Pacific, has become popular only in recent years. It first came about in the 1960s and 70s with the United States following studies which indicated that overfishing and environmental abuses had caused marine life to become endangered. This led to a wave of groups and initiatives with the collective goal of protecting the world's oceans.⁴⁰ The movement began with cleaning up oceans and beaches then continued with protecting wildlife, reducing waste, and creating marine-protected areas to protect the habitats of marine life.⁴¹ Ocean conservation has also become much more necessary, since despite these efforts, marine biodiversity has been unsuccessfully protected over the past few decades, both globally and in the Pacific Islands region. Due to the insufficiency of past measures and efforts, as much as 30% of the ocean requires immediate protection, but nations have only pledged to protect 10%.⁴² Regardless of drastically increased knowledge about the steps that must be taken to protect the ocean, conservation remains difficult as 2/3 of the world's oceans are high seas, and thus are beyond the jurisdiction of national entities. That is to say, the high seas are neutral territory, and thus no singular country is held responsible for their maintenance. As a result, it is difficult to coordinate effective and unified management of these zones.⁴³

³⁸Curtain, Richard, "The effects of aid dependence and the recommendations of the World Bank draft | Discussion Note 'Pacific Futures,'" Devpolicy, May 11, 2012, <https://devpolicy.org/the-effects-of-aid-dependence-and-the-recommendations-of-the-world-bank-draft-discussion-note-pacific-futures20120511/>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰"The History of Ocean Conservation," Four Fish, May 7, 2018, <https://fourfish.org/a/pe3l-UOimmN5m>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴²Karan, Liz, "High Seas Conservation Is a Priority for Pacific Island Leaders," The Pew Charitable Trusts, November 1, 2016, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2016/11/01/high-seas-conservation-is-a-priority-for-pacific-island-leaders>.

⁴³ Ibid.

Past Actions

Introduction

Both widespread international and regional entities have undertaken projects to combat environmental problems in the Pacific and beyond. On the international level, general guidelines have been adopted, although it is difficult to coordinate specific efforts. As previously mentioned, the United States has sponsored many initiatives related to conservation and climate change, including the creation of marine sanctuaries. This trend has held true throughout the past several decades until recently when the United States announced its intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement established a common framework for the global climate effort as well as determined the contributions of each nation needed to curb emissions.⁴⁴ However, the majority of progress from past actions has come directly from efforts of PIC: either a few nations working jointly on individual initiatives or groups that unite the entire region with overarching goals, including but not limited to the PIF. Measures pursued by PIC range from collective goals to minor agreements about fisheries.

Natural Resource-Based Initiatives

In the Pacific, many programs focus on working with natural resources. Scaling Up Pacific Adaptation (SUPA) is one such project being funded by the EU. It is led by Pacific youth and communities and designed to sustainably prepare individuals for changes in society and their livelihoods due to climate change.⁴⁵ Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change (PEBACC) is a similar project which has been implemented recently in Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.⁴⁶ The project serves to identify and address threats to Pacific ecosystems and livelihoods, as well as outline a path forward for other PIC.

⁴⁴"The Paris Agreement," United Nations Climate Change, Accessed May 21, 2020, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶"Natural Solutions to Climate Change in the Pacific Islands Region: Implementing Ecosystem-based adaptation," International Climate Initiative, Accessed May 21, 2020, https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/en/details/project/natural-solutions-to-climate-change-in-the-pacific-islands-region-implementing-ecosystembased-adaptation-14_II_109-389.

Planting Grass and Trees

The Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) is an initiative funded by the EU which supports developing countries that are vulnerable to climate change.⁴⁷ Although the funding for the initiative is derived from the EU, its programs in practice are merely sponsored and supported by the EU, and implementation requires cooperation and action from national partners. In addition to large projects focused on ecosystemic adaptation, GCCA+ also supports local efforts to the same end. Based on research which indicates that conservation and sustainability are alternatives to technological climate change solutions, grass was planted to prevent erosion in Fiji, and farmers in Samoa grew trees in nurseries with the goal of planting 2 million.⁴⁸ In Tuvalu, native species of grass were planted to help kill invasive seaweed which was harming both humans and fish alike. In the Solomon Islands, since mangroves, a type of tree, are a cost-efficient and sustainable solution to curbing erosion and sea level rise, the logging rights of individual citizens were traded for other assets.⁴⁹

Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific

The Pacific Islands Forum has established plans and goals for mitigating climate change, natural disasters, overreliance on certain industries, and ocean conservation failures. Firstly, the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) is the organization's foundation to promote sustainable development that resists climate change and natural disasters.⁵⁰ This document emphasizes the need to consolidate actions to address these two issues. Alongside the document, the forum members have committed to optimize their resources and expertise which can be used to monitor both topics.⁵¹ In addition, the members have sought to mainstream these themes and integrate them into all governmental structures and national developments so climate change and natural disasters are adequately accounted for throughout the Pacific society.⁵² The framework functions in correlation with the goals of the Paris Agreement and those of other international

⁴⁷"Pacific islanders work with nature to combat climate change," The Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Initiative, September 4, 2019, <https://www.gcca.eu/stories/pacific-islanders-work-nature-combat-climate-change>.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰"Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management," Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.forumsec.org/climate-change-and-disaster-risk-management/#1507155909516-coc204b9-b666>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

summits. Moreover, the Pacific Resilience Partnership, a group consisting of both financial stakeholders and community members, works together to fulfill the promises of the FRDP.⁵³

Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries

The PIF also maintains a framework dealing with regional fisheries. Economic returns were decreasing in this sector and the practices of this sector often contradict sustainability efforts.⁵⁴ Thus, in 2015, the PIF agreed upon the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries, which outlined several goals and strategies for creating sustainable and profitable development in both coastal and tuna fisheries.⁵⁵ From this roadmap, goals of sustainability, increased employment, resilience, profit, and food security were adopted.⁵⁶ With regard to tuna fisheries, the roadmap outlines strategies such as restricting foreign fishing, creating processing hubs between PIC, and raising the health and safety standards of the fishing industry.⁵⁷ Strategies to improve coastal fisheries included increasing oversight in order to establish better policy, involving women, children, and disadvantaged groups in the decision-making process, and coordinating efforts between the government, **NGOs**, and outreach organizations.⁵⁸ The Tokelau Arrangement for the Management of the South Pacific Longline Fishery was also a response adopted by many PIC, aimed at carrying out some of these same goals, specifically in the southern longline tuna fishery.⁵⁹ Ocean management efforts have also been carried out in accordance with the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, which primarily supports sustainable fishing efforts and is implemented by regional organizations.⁶⁰

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴“Fisheries,” Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Accessed August 19, 2020), <https://www.forumsec.org/fisheries/#1522200406166-722babd9-8280>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶“Future of Fisheries: A Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries,” United Nations Ocean Conference, Accessed August 19, 2020, <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=18778>.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹“Fisheries,” Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Accessed August 19, 2020), <https://www.forumsec.org/fisheries/#1522200406166-722babd9-8280>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy

Likewise, the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP) was adopted in 1999 by the PIF as a guiding principle for ocean management and conservation.⁶¹ It was developed by several regional organizations of the Pacific, with 5 core tenets: “improving our understanding of the ocean; sustainably developing and managing use of ocean resources; maintaining the health of the ocean; promoting the peaceful use of the ocean; and creating partnerships and promoting co-operation.”⁶² The PIROP is the foundation upon which the Framework for Pacific Oceanscape functions, which is a framework for regional initiatives, and has greater capacity for regional coordination, resource management, and implementation.⁶³

Conclusion

The Pacific Islands Forum, as well as the United Nations, have been heavily involved in actions to mitigate the many environmental challenges in the Pacific. Countless other initiatives have been established and implemented by the PIF with regard to countering climate change and improving ocean conservation and fishery management, but the aforementioned agreements are the core frameworks which have guided all efforts in the 21st century.



⁶¹“Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy and Framework for Integrated Strategic Action,” The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2005, <https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Pacific-Islands-Regional-Ocean-Policy-2002.pdf>.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³“Ocean Management & Conservation,” Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.forumsec.org/ocean-management-conservation/#1521764443986-5e0a2b27-b1bc>.

Possible Solutions

Education and Information

One of the biggest challenges facing the Pacific Islands is a lack of awareness of the region's foremost issues, which perpetuates negligence. One cost-efficient solution is to incorporate climate change lessons into both classrooms and jobsites.⁶⁴ Making people conscious of the impact that their actions have on their society is a first step to limiting human-driven malpractice. This education has begun in some nations, but the ever-evolving nature of the situation necessitates constant reevaluation of curriculums and training guidelines.⁶⁵ Increased awareness would mean that less individuals will fail to follow guidelines, some of which have been both purposefully and unwittingly ignored for years and others of which are constantly being put into place.

Even as policy and adaptation measures are changing rapidly, information across the region is still limited, so it can take a while for information to be effectively disseminated. Improving communication across the islands and creating more accountability with better monitoring systems and oversight would contribute favorably to the spread of new research and adaptation measures. Research revealed that **information technologies** were crucial in discerning the situation in the Pacific and possible solutions, but that limited information about topics such as pollution and water quality data as well as socioeconomic effects of climate change means that appropriate adaptation measures cannot be properly pursued in some cases.⁶⁶ Additional studies of local ecosystems, the results of new adaptation measures, and the overall effects of climate change- whether those are biological, sociological, or otherwise- would serve the region well as officials and scientists consider how to approach the region's environmental problems and to which projects funding should be directed.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Forbes, James Macbeth, "Coping with climate change in the Pacific island region," German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/14200.html>.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Fog, Lisbeth, "Research reveals Pacific Ocean threats and solutions," SciDev, May 27, 2009, <https://www.scidev.net/global/pollution/news/research-reveals-pacific-ocean-threats-and-solutio.html>.

⁶⁷Keener, Victoria W et al, "Climate Change and Pacific Islands: Indicators and Impacts," Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment (PIRCA), 2012, <https://www.cakex.org/sites/default/files/documents/Exec-Summary-PIRCA-FINAL2.pdf>.

New Energy Sources

The Pacific Islands rely heavily on fossil fuels for industries such as agriculture, forestry, and fishing. This dependence is largely ironic since the fossil fuels keeping these industries going are themselves simultaneously killing them, as well as jeopardizing the livelihoods and lives of millions of Pacific Islanders.⁶⁸ Newer, renewable energy sources would over time increase profit and reduce negative environmental effects. Renewable energy solutions have already begun to be explored in the Pacific, and particularly in Vanuatu. The nation implemented solar-powered fruit driers, as well as used solar energy in coral farming, demonstrating that agriculture techniques can be updated. Vanuatu has also headed proposals regarding creating grid-connected solar energy systems as well as harnessing hydroelectric power, and it believes that other islands could join them in taking advantage of solar and wind power.⁶⁹ Incorporating these energy sources more comprehensively- into all facets of Pacific life and across more islands- would contribute to climate change mitigation and support adaptation measures. However, a complete switch to renewable energy would be costly, and would require the adjustment of many traditional agricultural practices.

Liquefied natural gas is another possible energy source. It is the cleanest fossil fuel and can be harnessed to supply significant power.⁷⁰ Production is conveniently based in the Pacific and the fuel could become available to smaller markets in the coming years.⁷¹ Although liquefied natural gas is less readily available than other energy forms, tapping into this cleaner source of energy could bridge the gap between other fossil fuels and renewable energy.

Natural Solutions and Adaptation

The way of life in the Pacific Islands has been relatively constant for years. The islands rely on a select number of industries and these sectors largely uphold traditional practices. However, a possible solution to the problems facing the Pacific is to adjust these prescribed ways of life slightly in order

⁶⁸Forbes, James Macbeth, "Coping with climate change in the Pacific island region," German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/14200.html>.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰Stapczynski, Stephen and Anna Shiryayevskaya, "Tiny Pacific island eyes LNG market debut with supply deal," WorldOil, August 9, 2019, <https://www.worldoil.com/news/2019/8/9/tiny-pacific-island-eyes-lng-market-debut-with-supply-deal>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

to adapt to the changing environment. In some PIC, changes have been made. Some farmers have begun breeding more heat-resistant animals and cultivating heat-resistant crops, while invasive species of fish and plants have been targeted by conservation groups.⁷² However, more effort needs to be centered around adaptation. Projects could include regrowing grass, trees, and mangroves to prevent erosion, investing in new crops and farm animals, and pursuing sustainable farming and fishing. The possibility also remains of reducing the reliance on key industries such as forestry, fishing and farming, whose practices will be expensive and difficult to change. Looking beyond these industries to other potential sources of revenue and jobs could lead to the discovery of more environmentally friendly sources of revenue and livelihood. However, many islanders are resistant to these types of changes since traditional practices are central to the culture of the Pacific. Regardless of these sentiments, the environmental effects of climate change, ocean mismanagement, and natural disasters could be mitigated by changing traditional practices and reducing the regional overdependence on certain industries.

Cultural Protection

There are only eight UNESCO World Heritage sites in Pacific small island developing states (SIDS), but there are over 1000 globally.⁷³ Two of these are classified as endangered, due to logging and mining in one case and siltation (the process of silt gathering in water and dirtying it) in the other.⁷⁴ This statistic reveals the severe underrepresentation of the Pacific and means that little protection is designated for the region's culture. Pushing for the UNESCO recognition of more sites, many of which are already on UNESCO's tentative consideration list, would lead to more awareness and support for Pacific heritage - which is in jeopardy due to the resource limitations and environmental challenges in the region. Furthermore, this recognition could boost tourism and would create more protection for the natural and cultural elements of the Pacific.⁷⁵ In considering this solution, one

⁷²Forbes, James Macbeth, "Coping with climate change in the Pacific island region," German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/14200.html>.

⁷³Kiddle, Luke, "Pacific World Heritage sites: significant under-representation," Devpolicy, August 1, 2018, <https://devpolicy.org/pacific-world-heritage-sites-significant-under-representation-20180801/>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

must recognize that since UNESCO has failed to recognize more Pacific sites thus far, convincing them could prove difficult and resource intensive.

In addition, there are other designations which confer protection. Four marine national monuments were established in the Pacific by the United States, in the nation's largest marine conservation effort.⁷⁶ This designation led to protection of biodiversity, further exploration and research of the ocean, and more education about these regions.⁷⁷ Likewise, the creation of marine sanctuaries and marine protected areas provide much needed protection to natural habitats. A similar program, either sponsored by the United States or established by Pacific leaders, could achieve similar levels of support, protection, funding, and research in the area and result in the maintenance of Pacific culture.

Conclusion

Addressing the many environmental, social, and cultural issues is complex, especially since they all intersect, and possible solutions must account for many factors. Despite many obstacles along the way, delegates must creatively address the region's problems with solutions that consider all interests, as well as adhere to the core PIF values of maintaining effective regional cooperation and a focus on Pacific interests.

⁷⁶"Marine National Monuments in the Pacific," NOAA Fisheries, Accessed May 21, 2020, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/habitat-conservation/marine-national-monuments-pacific>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Bloc Positions

Foreign aid and cooperation

The Pacific Islands, particularly the small developing islands, are dependent on foreign aid. Often they retain full autonomy in the implementation of this money, but sometimes foreign investment is more direct. Moreover, many international organizations, as well as NGOs, are available to provide support with regard to specific programs, sectors, or initiatives. Aid, either in the form of foreign investment or organizational support, is inherently flexible and could be put to many essential uses in the Pacific. In addition, nations such as Australia and New Zealand, permanent members of the PIF, have the capacity to disseminate regional aid, and already have aid programs in place.⁷⁸ However, there are factors to take into consideration when deciding about the implementation of aid. Countries who receive significant aid do not necessarily show development or improvement in their economies and aid comes with a political agenda. However, foreign support has often buoyed the Pacific and may be a necessary part of an effective solution to the various problems facing the region at present. Countries like Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Vanuatu are less likely to support additional foreign intervention, since they receive less aid per capita as compared with nations such as Niue, Tuvalu, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Digitization and technology

The remoteness of the Pacific Islands contributes significantly to the difficulty of intercommunication and an inability to effectively coordinate on the implementation of regional efforts, especially since they necessitate frequent change. The **digitization** of regional information and new research could connect the islands in their efforts to enforce new policy solutions. Moreover, publicizing regional landmarks could boost tourism as well as global awareness of the islands' rich history, and more effective records of natural disasters could lead to a better understanding of how to combat them internally and a more cognizant population. However, loss of tradition and homogenization could be possible, and the difficulty of implementing this digitization

⁷⁸Dornan, Matthew and Jonathan Pryke, "Foreign Aid to the Pacific: Trends and Developments in the Twenty-First Century," *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* 4, no. 3 (2017): 386-404, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/app5.185>.

with the limited technology in the region might call for the training of new professionals in technological fields to support these efforts. PIF member states with more resources and less governmental affiliation with ancient traditions- including [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#)- would be more likely to fund digitization efforts, while smaller developing nations such as [Nauru](#) and the [Cook Islands](#) may be reluctant to contribute.

Long-term investment

Several of the problems facing the Pacific cannot be dealt with sufficiently with only an eye on the present, but rather require longer-term, infrastructure-focused solutions. Investments must go towards new sources of energy - solar power, wind power, liquified natural gas, among other options - in order to reduce carbon emissions and prevent the imminent loss of entire islands to the rising ocean. The expansion of economic pursuits beyond fishing and agriculture, or at least the implementation of more progressive techniques and machinery, will help provide long-term stability for the region and the economy. In addition, detailed conservation measures and cultural preservation efforts must be implemented instead of the continuous and rapid depletion of resources, which has been necessary to keep island economies afloat but leads to severe environmental and cultural effects. These future-thinking measures, however, could lead to a lack of training for new jobs, a loss of traditional roles, and the potential danger of a collapsing economy during the transition to new practices. Thus, nations who highly value traditional practices, including [Tonga](#), [Samoa](#), and [Kiribati](#), may fight back against internal overhaul that could jeopardize their sacred traditions.

Grassroots investment

Instead of a focus on long-term investment, an emphasis on current and potential grassroots projects and economic practices would target immediate concerns such as dwindling jobs and food security. Such efforts include increasing the sustainability of current agricultural and fishing practices as well as finding natural solutions to address the effects of climate change. Many of the initiatives discussed previously require further funding, and concentration in these areas would steady the negative effects of immediate problems. However, the funding for these projects is often uneven, with some countries able to carry them out and others unable to do so. For example, [Vanuatu](#) and

Fiji already have implemented many initiatives, whereas the Federated States of Micronesia, for example, are extremely dependent on United States aid, and thus have adopted fewer grassroots initiatives with sufficient funding. Moreover, prioritizing the improvement of current practices could be too little to stave off human-induced climate change in the region, depending on the strength and efficacy of new policy.

Glossary

Atoll: a ring-shaped coral reef, or close coral islands, that surround or nearly surround a lagoon.

Biodiversity: the variety of life in a particular habitat or ecosystem. In the case of the Pacific Islands, marine biodiversity is crucial.

Digitization: the process of converting information into a digital form.

Fishery: a place or area engaged in the raising and harvesting of fish for commercial purposes.

GDP (gross domestic product): the total monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country in a period of time.

Information technology: the study or use of systems, especially computers, for storing, retrieving, and sending information.

Invasive species: an organism that causes ecological harm in an area to which it is not native.

NGO (non-governmental organization): a nonprofit organization which operates independently of governmental involvement, typically in response to a social or political issue.

Ocean conservation: the study of marine plants, animal resources, and ecosystem functions in order to protect and preserve the oceans against exploitation.

PIC: an acronym, referring to all of the Pacific Island countries.

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Singh, Shailendra and Vijay Naidu. "Coverage of extreme weather events and natural hazards in Pacific island countries: The need for media capacity-building." *Pacific Journalism Review* 24, no. 1 (2018): 87-101. <https://www-scopus-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85050489211&origin=inward&txGid=d38a04e840e19750fa462ad3229abbd6>.

Stapczynski, Stephen and Anna Shiryayevskaya. "Tiny Pacific island eyes LNG market debut with supply deal." *WorldOil*. August 9, 2019. <https://www.worldoil.com/news/2019/8/9/tiny-pacific-island-eyes-lng-market-debut-with-supply-deal>.

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TOPIC B: MOBILITY

Statement of the Problem

Introduction

Many of the economic struggles of **Pacific Islands Countries (PICs)** can be traced to the geography of the region. While Topic A covered the environmental problems that eventually affect the economy as a result of the location, Topic B will cover the direct economic effect of the geography of the region. To understand the problems, one must first understand the geography. The geographic struggles of PICs center around their remoteness. **Remoteness**, defined as “the trade-weighted average of the [country’s] distance from world markets,” quantifies the economic strain of a country that is far from others.⁷⁹ A 2007 study that measured the remoteness of each PIC found that of the 219 countries in the study, the average rank of PICs was 197, where 219 was most remote and 1 was least remote.⁸⁰ The basic idea behind remoteness as an economic strain is that with more distance between markets, transportation costs are higher, which limits productivity. The result is a ‘Pacific Paradox’ where PICs consistently report low economic growth rates despite having ample natural resources and a burgeoning workforce.⁸¹ From 2001 to 2008, **real GDP growth**, a measure of economic output adjusted for inflation, averaged 2.2%, and from 2009 to 2016 real GDP growth averaged 2.4%, despite a worldwide average of about 2.9% in that same timeframe. Though recent years show an improvement, these average rates were propped up by Papua New Guinea’s larger economy--most nations experienced very low growth rates consistent with the averages from the past decade. Furthermore, projections for the potential maximum growth rate of PICs were higher than the achieved growth rates, showing PICs are underperforming.⁸²

⁷⁹ CDP Secretariat. “Measuring Remoteness for the Identification of LDC.” United Nations, August 2015. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/remoteness.pdf>.

⁸⁰ “Improving Labour Market Outcomes in the Pacific.” International Labor Organization, June 2017. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-suva/documents/publication/wcms_559066.pdf.

⁸¹ Teuea, Toatu. “Unravelling the Pacific Paradox.” National Center for Development Studies, 2001. <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/40327/3/1702Teuea.pdf>.

⁸² Bank, *Pacific Economic Monitor – December 2019*.

There are several trends that tie together PICs' economies. Characterized by large service sectors, heavy reliance on tourism, and underdeveloped industrial and agricultural sectors, PICs often fall into the **MIRAB** (Migration, Remittances, Foreign Aid, Public Bureaucracy) model of an economy, which recent data has suggested might be causing substantial issues for the long-term growth of the economy.⁸³⁸⁴ The economic growth of PICs is also hindered by trade disputes. In the absence of a large, comprehensive regional trade agreement, trade in the region is regulated by bilateral and small multilateral agreements, such as the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (SPARTECA), in which certain specified products are allowed to enter larger nations duty-free.⁸⁵ Exports in the region have grown significantly since 2000—from less than 4 billion USD to 9.6 billion USD in 2013—but still make up a minuscule percentage of worldwide exports.⁸⁶ The result of a poor trade environment has been specialization in niche markets, an example from Fiji being the bottled water market, meaning that PICs have several potential industries that go undeveloped.⁸⁷

Several economic models could be used to diagnose the problems in the Pacific, but the general conclusion of most of them would be that PICs are plagued by remoteness and its effects. Thus, the Pacific Islands Forum will be tasked with discussing the many types of movement in the Pacific: movement of labor, information, goods and services. The committee should seek to improve the economic outlook of PICs by addressing the unique problems of infrastructure and migration.

The importance of infrastructure

As debate will focus on improving economic conditions that arise from remoteness, an understanding of infrastructure is critical. The definition of **infrastructure** in a World Bank initiative focused on the Pacific is “the construction, operation, and renovation of physical structures that provide a platform for most other economic activities,” which includes “telecommunications,

⁸³ Tisdell, Clem, 2014. "The MIRAB Model of Small Island Economies in the Pacific and their Security Issues: Revised Version," Social Economics, Policy and Development Working Papers 165087, University of Queensland, School of Economics.

⁸⁴ Bertram, Geoff. "The MIRAB Model Twelve Years On." *The Contemporary Pacific* 11, no. 1 (1999): 105-38. Accessed June 20, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/23717414.

⁸⁵ "Improving Labour Market Outcomes in the Pacific."

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

electricity, water and waste services, roads and public works programs, ports and airports, and shipping and aviation services.”⁸⁸



Infrastructure is important because it is linked to economic growth. A World Bank study noted several pathways through which infrastructure improves economic outcomes. One reason was a reduction in production costs, as sounder physical structures and technology allow for faster creation of goods. Another was the development of a more diversified economy, by enabling the growth of alternative employment and consumption possibilities.⁸⁹ The benefits of better infrastructure contribute to a better overall quality of life, but the study importantly remarks that only through the proper use and operation of infrastructure do these benefits occur; its simple existence is not sufficient.⁹⁰

Current Situation: Infrastructure

This section will focus on the movement of things, such as information, goods, and services. There are plenty of numbers relevant to the present status of infrastructure in the Pacific Islands, so only

⁸⁸ World Bank. 2006. *The Pacific infrastructure challenge : a review of obstacles and opportunities for improving performance in the Pacific Islands (English)*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/680631468249703830/The-Pacific-infrastructure-challenge-a-review-of-obstacles-and-opportunities-for-improving-performance-in-the-Pacific-Islands>

⁸⁹ Kessides, Christine. *The Contributions of Infrastructure to Economic Development: A Review of Experience and Policy Implications*. World Bank Discussion Papers 213. Washington, D.C: World Bank, 1993.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

the notable successes and shortcomings will be reviewed. Regarding electricity, 70% of people in PICs lack access to electricity, and the 30% that do have access are plagued by high costs and unreliable supply (frequent blackouts).⁹¹ Only 4 nations in the Pacific are able to provide 80% or more of their populations with clean water, and 4 nations provide 80% or more with adequate sanitation.⁹² Clean water supply is difficult since many nations lack a continuous supply such as a river. Thus, many poorer nations rely on rainwater collection for water supply, which is far less stable.⁹³ Raw supply is just one issue: operation of limited water is another. To measure the efficiency of water use, one can use the 'non-revenue water' benchmarking system, which measures the amount of water in the supply that is not billed to people. In other words, it is the percentage of water that gets wasted. Using this benchmark, PICs, with a few exceptions, all fall above the target range of 20%-30% waste.⁹⁴ Samoa and Fiji are among the worst in non-revenue water efficiency, with wasted water percentages between 40% and 55%.⁹⁵

Interestingly, judging based on the population size and traffic, the road density of most PICs is adequate. That said, road quality is thought to be poor based on individual analyses of countries' roads and the percentage of paved roads in a country.⁹⁶ Ports are an important avenue for people and goods to enter and exit a country, but there is not as obvious method for rating their quality. However, one can look to the throughput, the amount of goods that move through the port, to estimate the efficiency of the location. Using this metric coupled with comparisons to data and observations from Caribbean nations, a convincing argument can be made that the ports in PICs are inefficient.⁹⁷ This is based on low throughput figures and a lack of useful equipment—such as shore-based container cranes—to quickly process goods. In addition, port efficiency is hindered by poor maintenance and operation.⁹⁸

⁹¹ World Bank, "Pacific Infrastructure Challenge."

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Communications technology is an underperforming sector with extreme potential. The **teledensity**, measured in connections per 100 people, is very low in PICs, with only Fiji and Palau over 20.⁹⁹ Internet access is limited and expensive, perhaps due to the monopolies created by Internet Service Providers in most countries.¹⁰⁰ Developing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is important because it goes hand in hand with economic growth. A United Nations report estimated that an increase in ICT enabled opportunities has the potential to increase the annual real GDP growth rate of Fiji by 1.2 percentage points between 2015 and 2040.¹⁰¹ In other PICs, the study estimates that modest to low growth would occur as well, depending on the level of investment in ICT infrastructure, human resources and skills in ICT, and the business environment.¹⁰² These economic benefits can be seen through outsourcing. The UN report notes that an ICT expansion could provide up to 6,000 jobs (in Fiji, but similar numbers in other nations) by opening up outsourcing of tasks such as customer service to PICs.¹⁰³ With better ICT infrastructure, citizens will become more skilled in using technology, an important consideration for the modern job market, as “lack of skill in technology” was the reason cited by employers for 85.7% of “hard to fill” job vacancies.¹⁰⁴ Quality of life improvements are also enabled by better ICT investment and operation as the government could provide online services, thereby expanding its reach to more remote populations in the countries.¹⁰⁵

The general trend of infrastructure in PICs is that there is plenty of room for improvement. While PICs have certainly been dealt an unfavorable hand geographically, inefficient investment, operation, and management of infrastructure have prevented countries from reaching their full potentials.

Current Situation: Migration

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “Broadband Connectivity in Pacific Island Countries.” The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, January 2018. https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/PACIFIC_PAPER_Final_Publication_1_1.pdf.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ “Improving Labour Market Outcomes in the Pacific.”

¹⁰⁵ “Broadband Connectivity in Pacific Island Countries.”

This section will focus on the movement of people in and out of PICs. To understand migration in the Pacific, it is important to understand the population and labor market trends. From 2000 to 2015, there was a 47.5% increase in the population, from 7.2 million to 10.5 million.¹⁰⁶ The working age population increased and there were increases in the urbanized population. Despite the overall increase, however, some countries saw stagnant population growth and some saw population declines. The unique makeup and trends of each PIC is one reason why it is difficult to treat a problem with a single, sweeping resolution.¹⁰⁷ The population growth brings the potential for trouble, for though population growth is generally good for economic growth, projections suggest that there will be a persistent excess in the labor supply in coming years.¹⁰⁸ There is also a very large **informal economy** in PICs, due in part to much of its economy being service-based.¹⁰⁹ An informal economy is “the diversified set of economic activities, enterprises, jobs, and workers that are not regulated or protected by the state. The concept originally applied to self-employment in small unregistered enterprises. It has been expanded to include wage employment in unprotected jobs.”¹¹⁰ Large informal economies are troublesome for both the government and workers. A worker in the informal economy might not receive the same worker protections as mandated by the government and could be subject to harsh working hours and low wages, among other things. On the other hand, the government may lose out to tax revenue, as money in the informal economy often goes unreported on tax forms.¹¹¹ For analysts of Pacific economies, the large informal economy also makes economic models more difficult to create as data may not be all-inclusive.

Another characteristic of the labor market is a high rate of migration. In 2016 an estimated 460,000 Pacific Islanders lived overseas, a significant portion of the population.¹¹² The benefits of migration are numerous. PICs see their people have higher rates of employment, more income through **remittances** (transfers of money from foreign workers to their home countries), more education,

¹⁰⁶ “Improving Labour Market Outcomes in the Pacific.”

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ “Informal Economy | WIEGO.” Accessed June 23, 2020. <https://www.wiego.org/informal-economy#:~:text=The%20informal%20economy%20is%20the,wage%20employment%20in%20unprotected%20jobs>.

¹¹¹ “Improving Labour Market Outcomes in the Pacific.”

¹¹² Ibid.

and skills development.¹¹³ However, too much migration comes with problems. Notable in the Pacific, there has been a 'brain drain' caused by permanent migration. Brain drain is when skilled workers tend to leave PICs to find employment elsewhere, and when too many skilled workers leave, there are not enough to fill skilled positions in PICs.¹¹⁴ Thus, though there are burgeoning populations in PICs, there is a small labor market, partly due to this tremendous **mismatch**. There are plenty of positions available for skilled workers but there are mostly unskilled workers in the labor force. This mismatch leads to low productivity and high unemployment.¹¹⁵ Seasonal migration schemes have proven effective at reducing this brain drain, however. Temporary programs allow workers to move between nations to find work for a period of time before returning to their home countries. Workers are able to find employment, send remittances, gain skills, and then return to potentially find employment as a skilled worker.¹¹⁶ Right now, however, temporary migration schemes are neither well managed nor regulated.

The Pacific Islands Forum is tasked with improving the economic outlook of Pacific Islands Countries by focusing on issues of mobility. The committee should look to implement policies that focus on two distinct areas: weak, underperforming infrastructure, and an oversaturated labor market.



¹¹³ Voigt-Graf, Carmen, and Yoko Kanemasu. "Labour Mobility in Pacific Island Countries." ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries, November 2019. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-suva/documents/publication/wcms_712549.pdf.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

History of the Problem

Even following many PICs gaining independence, the woes surrounding mobility arose from two major failings: over-reliance on foreign aid and unregulated foreign direct investment. We will first consider the Pacific circumstances after achieving independence, then examine each area leading to present-day struggle.

Colonialism and Independence in the Pacific

The first direct involvement by a European power in the Pacific occurred in Tahiti in 1843, when French colonizers arrived.¹¹⁷ Fiji later followed suit and was colonized by Britain. These colonies were established after the appearance of Pacific islands communities in European history books, courtesy of explorers in the region. Before colonial administrators arrived, these explorers were mainly Christian missionaries.¹¹⁸ With the advent of colonialism in the region came diseases, racism, and changes to Pacific culture. In the years following initial colonization, the region was partially controlled by Spain, France, Britain, the US, and later, Japan. Pacific Islands served as intense battlegrounds during World War II, and after the war, Pacific islands communities began to strive for independence. The first state to achieve sovereignty was Samoa in 1962. From then until 1994, PICs achieved independence and the last nation to gain independence was Palau.¹¹⁹ Despite independence, due to the strategic importance of many islands, larger powers such as the United States and Australia still maintained heavy influence in the region through aid and other channels.¹²⁰

The shadow of colonialism still remains in many PICs. Since independence movements in the Pacific occurred after many African independence movements, PICs were able to tailor their approaches based on what worked and did not work in Africa. This meant that many PICs chose to maintain relationships with former colonial powers.¹²¹ Choosing to maintain the colonial relationship yielded

¹¹⁷ "History of the Pacific Island Countries." Accessed July 12, 2020. <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/spf/palm2000/palm-summit/guest/history.html>.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Hughes, Robert. "CORRUPTION." In *Passage of Change: Law, Society and Governance in the Pacific*, edited by Jowitt Anita and Cain Tess Newton, 35-50. Canberra: ANU Press, 2010. Accessed July 12, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24h3jd.11.

¹²¹ MacDonald, Barrie. "Decolonization and Beyond: The Framework for Post-Colonial Relationships in Oceania." *The Journal of Pacific History* 21, no. 3 (1986): 115-26. Accessed July 11, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/25168899.

interesting, but not necessarily positive, effects. Western ideals of 'progress' on occasion proved to be mutually exclusive with traditional Pacific ideals. Small, separate, and often impoverished communities were compelled consolidated into larger ones that could better offer modern services.¹²² In doing so, colonial territorial frameworks were enforced, which ruptured communities. However, this was viewed positively because of an association between economic strength and Western ideals, due in large part to the sustained Western presence following independence.¹²³

At the outset of most PICs in 1986, Pacific economies were weak and ill-equipped to fully utilize their economic potentials. Most countries began to build industries around a single natural resource. In Nauru, for example, phosphates were abundant and thus had their development prioritized. Another economic factor with which to contend was the smallness of Pacific economies. A small economy, while potentially able to quickly adjust, risks a growth ceiling.¹²⁴ Even countries such as Papua New Guinea, which has a more developed economy, account for a minuscule portion of the world market such that they struggle to compete.¹²⁵ A solution to smallness was the creation of regional trade agreements such as SPARTECA and the participation in agreements such as the Lomé Convention, but these are limited in scope.¹²⁶ Remoteness from each other and fragmentation also hinder economic growth, as PICs are plagued with high costs of communication. Thus, PICs suffered limited ability to achieve real economic growth, but had a Western mindset that growth was essential.¹²⁷ This is the post-colonial dilemma that allowed for the development of mobility problems.

Over-reliance on foreign aid

PICs are among the highest recipients of aid in the world. **Official development assistance (ODA)** is higher in the Pacific than in any other region in the world based on aid per capita.¹²⁸ Furthermore, 10

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Petar Kurecic, Goran Luburic, and Goran Kozina. "Smallness of the Economy as a (Dis)advantage: The Evidence from Selected Interdependent Macroeconomic Data." *World Review of Political Economy* 8, no. 3 (2017): 416-42. Accessed July 12, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/10.13169/worlevipoliecon.8.3.0416.

¹²⁵ MacDonald, "Decolonization and Beyond"

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Knapman, Bruce. "Aid and the Dependent Development of Pacific Island States." *The Journal of Pacific History* 21, no. 3 (1986): 139-52. Accessed July 12, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/25168901; MacDonald, "Decolonization and Beyond"

¹²⁸ Dornan, Matthew, and Jonathan Pryke. "Foreign Aid to the Pacific: Trends and Developments in the Twenty-First Century." *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* 4, no. 3 (2017): 386-404. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.185>.

Pacific countries rank in the 25 highest aid receiving countries as a percentage of Gross National Income.¹²⁹ Recall the MIRAB model of an economy: the “Aid” section makes up a tremendous amount of PICs’ income.

The reliance on aid started soon after independence as a means to drive economic growth despite limited real potential (‘real’ in the economic sense of the term).¹³⁰ Foreign aid went toward funding social programs and infrastructure which created initial short-term benefit but long-term harm. The intricacies of the harm arise from a debate over what causes economic growth. Foreign aid became the norm in the aftermath of World War II, beginning with the United States’ Marshall Plan. Giving money to poorer nations became a new way to spread influence.¹³¹ However, it was also thought that aid, as a means of accumulating capital, could lead to economic growth. A full explanation of this idea is beyond the scope of this background guide, but the basic premise is that acquiring capital, whether through domestic revenue or aid, would yield economic growth.¹³² It was this mindset that led to the aid model currently seen in the Pacific: countries are only able to provide so much capital from income-generating projects, so they need aid to maintain stable growth.

The economic woes of PICs have already been discussed, so clearly the simplistic assumptions of this model were not accurate. The important takeaway is that real growth is limited. This means that no matter how much capital is thrown at PICs, there is only so much sustainable growth that can occur. The total number of necessary income-generating projects (such as the construction of a port) is finite. This means that as aid continues to flow in, but the number of income-generating projects diminishes, there are several frequent consequences. First, the bureaucracy that handles the aid expands to more efficiently approve new projects and handle incoming aid. The new bureaucrats’ salaries are paid either by the domestic revenue or by the aid itself.¹³³ Second, since so many projects need to be approved to make use of all the aid, they are often poorly managed and do not produce as much revenue as they should. Third, Pacific governments want to use aid to maintain a stable growth rate, but with projects exhausted, the only way to spend the aid is in imports and overseas investments. Aid is meant to bolster growth in the receiving country, not to be spent elsewhere to

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ MacDonald, “Decolonization and Beyond”

¹³¹ Knapman, “Aid and the Dependent Development of Pacific Island States.”

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

bolster growth elsewhere. Finally, since the income-generating projects produce limited capital, but consistent growth is wanted, the only way to account for the difference is with more aid. A vicious cycle ensues that ensnares PICs in a perpetual need for foreign aid.¹³⁴ When aid is abundant but domestic revenue is scarce, a dangerous tendency emerges for Pacific governments to view aid as free and unlimited, further entrapping PICs in a cycle of aid.¹³⁵

While it's debatable whether or not an over-reliance on aid is completely detrimental, a few very clear harms exist. High costs, particularly in expanded bureaucracy, exist when aid is allocated on a by-project basis. A coordinated, programmatic approach to aid is much more efficient, but only 32% of Pacific aid is administered in this way, meaning inefficiency hurts many Pacific governments.¹³⁶ An example of a programmatic approach to aid is general budget support, which is better for a country because it enables growth in all sectors.¹³⁷ In the Pacific, there is also volatility with aid flows, as it is subject to worldwide shocks. With higher aid volatility comes higher economic vulnerability, potentially disastrous given a worldwide economic shock. Similarly, aid predictability in the Pacific is poor, leaving governments with less ability to plan for the future.¹³⁸ Thus, though aid does improve quality of life, an over-reliance on it leaves countries susceptible to severe economic damage. In the context of mobility, an over-reliance on aid hurts infrastructure creation and maintenance and yields fewer productive jobs, contributing to an oversaturated labor force.

Unregulated foreign direct investment

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is the designation given to when a firm or individual in one country makes an investment into business interests in another country. This most commonly manifests as an investor establishing business operations in a foreign country or acquiring business assets from a foreign company.¹³⁹ In theory, FDI is beneficial for developing countries because it advances industries. New countries struggling with funds are aided by companies entering, investing in

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Dornan and Pryke, "Foreign Aid to the Pacific."

¹³⁷ Leiderer, Stefan. *Fungibility And The Choice Of Aid Modalities*, WIDER Working Paper 2012/068 Helsinki: UNU-WIDER, 2012.

¹³⁸ Dornan and Pryke, "Foreign Aid to the Pacific."

¹³⁹ Chen, James. "Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)." Investopedia, February 24, 2020. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fdi.asp>.

infrastructure to create a profit, providing employment, and generally aiding the community and increasing the quality of life. These benefits, however, have been muted in the Pacific for two main reasons: insufficient education and monopoly pricing.¹⁴⁰

The earliest FDI in the Pacific arose as a result of colonialism: the first major areas of investment were in agriculture and trading.¹⁴¹ As PICs have grown, FDI has spread to petroleum, minerals, tourism, and many other industries. Part of the appeal for foreign investors of PICs is the wealth of cheap labor available. With skills development and training programs, foreign firms could create jobs while maximizing profits. In certain cases, such as with the firm Polynesian Airlines, training programs have successfully produced skilled workers to perform jobs in the company. In many others, however, skills development eludes firms. There are two explanations to explain the poor performance. One is the fault of the firm: good training programs require investment, and short-sighted employers may not take the steps required to create a strong program. The lack of optimization of skills training leads to poor results. The other is the fault of the government: insufficient education for the general populace has created such a skills gap that either employers cannot provide enough training or it is no longer profitable to do so. In either case, the benefits to the host nations are diminished because workers cannot reap them. The skills training and job creation that could arise from FDI has not been fully realized, especially evident with the current labor mismatch that this committee is tasked with fixing.

The second major issue with FDI in the Pacific is monopolies. Since PICs often lack sufficient resources to attract multiple firms' investments, large corporations often face little competition in their respective industries. The harms of these monopolies are realized most relevantly in infrastructure pricing. Multinational oil corporations in PICs tend to drive up prices, and in several sectors such as electricity and travel, costs are higher than the equilibrium price.¹⁴² An example is in air services in Tonga. Policies prevent competition for domestic air travel in Tonga that result in low frequency of flights and high prices.

¹⁴⁰ Parry, Thomas G. "Foreign Investment and Industry in the Pacific Islands." *The Journal of Developing Areas* 22, no. 3 (1988): 381-400. Accessed July 12, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/4191673.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² World Bank, "Pacific Infrastructure Challenge."

FDI has the potential to yield benefits, but has created problems in the Pacific. A large cause of the surplus of unskilled labor is a result of policy failures surrounding FDI, and overall economic growth has been hampered by exploitative pricing.

Past Actions

Introduction

In seeking to address issues of mobility in the Pacific, actions have been taken to separately address migration and infrastructure. We will first discuss the shortcomings of infrastructure development, and then look into various migration schemes and the effects they have had on development.

Past attempts to improve infrastructure

In the past, as Pacific governments have attempted to improve infrastructure, they have been riddled with bureaucratic inefficiencies. Recall that infrastructure projects have largely been funded by foreign aid, which as has been discussed above, causes unnecessary bureaucratic waste and rarely leads to legitimate infrastructure reform. Coupled with a governing system riddled with inadequacies, past attempts to improve infrastructure have failed. Government mismanagement first manifests in governments' prioritization when undertaking infrastructure projects. Often Pacific governments choose to begin new projects (such as building a new road) instead of maintaining old ones, which raises costs and does not guarantee quality improvements.¹⁴³ This also means that many infrastructure elements are poorly maintained, as the threshold of funds needed to build something new is higher than that to maintain something that already exists. Lackluster policy implementation causes further inefficiency. Fiscal, regulatory, and policy decisions rarely align, which causes loss of revenue, confusion, and a general failure to follow through on sector reform.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, strategies to improve infrastructure are often uncoordinated. For example, optimizations can be made when performing infrastructure projects—such as tending to telecommunications lines and water pipes at the same time, as they are often buried in the same area—but they are rarely utilized, and thus time and capital are lost. This lack of coordination extends to public and private sector communications, manifesting as private sector disinterest in Pacific infrastructure due to uncertainty surrounding government policy and desires.¹⁴⁵ The inefficiency in government is bolstered by a near complete lack of accountability. Many infrastructure sectors are controlled by government-regulated

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

monopolies, which means there is neither competition nor accountability to consumers. The lack of competition for services coupled with weak courts and limited transparency means that inefficiencies have few mechanisms for removal, and thus fester.¹⁴⁶ These poor governing decisions coupled with inefficiencies resulting from aid funding have meant that the Pacific is in desperate need of improvements to its infrastructure.



Australia's Seasonal Worker Program

A few actions have been taken to address the growing unemployment in the Pacific, but the most successful have been temporary migration schemes. **Australia's Seasonal Worker Program (SWP)** is one of the more prominent schemes in the Pacific that is aimed at achieving a 'triple-win': the workers in the program benefit from having work, skills development, and greater income, the sending countries benefit by receiving remittances from foreign workers, and destination countries benefit from having an expanded labor force that can help accomplish tasks such as a harvest.¹⁴⁷ Currently, ten countries participate in the SWP and it seeks to provide labor relief in the Australian agriculture and accommodation sectors.¹⁴⁸ The program can accommodate up to 12,000 workers from the Pacific and provides visas for up to nine months out of every year of worker participation.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ "Gibson, John; McKenzie, David. Development through Seasonal Worker Programs: The Case of New Zealand's RSE Program. Policy Research Working Paper; No. 6762. 2012. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/18356>"

¹⁴⁸ Department of Education, Skills, and Employment. "Frequently Asked Questions about the Seasonal Worker Programme." Australian Government, July 7, 2020. <https://www.employment.gov.au/frequently-asked-questions-about-seasonal-worker-programme#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20Seasonal%20Worker,island%20countries%20and%20Timor%2DLeste.>

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

Workers must spend at least three months per year in their home countries. In the 2017 fiscal year, 6,166 workers were accepted into the program.¹⁵⁰ Of the workers sent, 65 percent were unemployed prior to joining the program. The higher the number of previously unemployed workers in the program, the greater maximization of labor-sending potential.¹⁵¹ Of the participants, 42 percent participated in a free, formal Add-on Skills Training included in the program to help workers develop skills that they could take back to their home countries.¹⁵² Although this portion is small, 91 percent of participants said they had learned skills in the program that would be useful in their home countries.¹⁵³

The impacts have been mostly positive. About 86 percent of workers in the program remit money which has led to a 4.3 percent increase in income across the Pacific.¹⁵⁴ The impact in sending communities was seen primarily in savings, not necessarily in income. For example, in Tonga, households saw a 169 percent increase in savings per capita.¹⁵⁵ In sending households, the proportion of school-age children enrolled in and attending classes was 7.7 percent higher than non-sending households.¹⁵⁶ Importantly, despite worries that the increase in remittances would disincentivize the remaining members of a household to seek work, no notable impact on household labor supply was observed; there was no statistically significant impact on work incentives. The SWP has employed 17,320 Pacific islanders since 2012 and has delivered approximately 144 million Australian dollars (around 103 million USD) in net income gain to sending households.

The SWP has not been without shortcomings, however. One major problem is that it is thought to perpetuate gender inequality in sending communities as only 14.4 percent of participants are female.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, the remittances received by households are not often invested or spent in the surrounding communities as they ought to be, likely due to a lack of business opportunities. It is

¹⁵⁰ "Maximizing the Development Impacts from Temporary Migration: Recommendations for Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme ." World Bank, 2018.

<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/572391522153097172/pdf/122270-repl-PUBLIC.pdf>.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ball, Rochelle, Rochelle Bailey, Nicole Haley, and Meg Keen. "Pacific Labor Mobility: Removing the Gender Blinkers." Australian National University, 2015. http://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2016-07/ib2015.51_ball_bailey_haley_and_keen.pdf.

because of this that 14 to 16 percent of homes saw dwelling improvements, and most households saw increases in income.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, the church received a large amount of the money from the increased savings. Whether this yielded benefits to the community in terms of **pastoral care** is difficult to analyze. This highlights a very important problem with the model: without sufficient economic activity in sending communities, remittances from temporary migration schemes cannot provide as much economic growth as thought. Another problem seen in the program was limited participation across the entire Pacific and also limited participation among poorer communities within Pacific nations.¹⁵⁹ This limited participation in poorer communities likely resulted in the high barrier to entry; workers need to pay for their transportation to the destination country, as well as for obtaining passport and visa services. All in all, Australia's SWP has yielded promising results, but it can be optimized to produce even better results.

New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer Program

Another example of a temporary migration scheme is **New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer Program** (RSE program). In this program, New Zealand accepts up to 5,000 workers from participating PICs to work for a maximum of seven months per eleven-month period in New Zealand.¹⁶⁰ Similar to the SWP, workers can easily return year after year to the program. The majority of the jobs are in the agriculture and viticulture sectors, with workers performing jobs such as pruning trees and vines, picking apples, citrus, and grapes, and picking and packing kiwifruit.¹⁶¹ Much of the onus for quality of life for workers in the program is placed on employers. They are tasked with paying for half of workers' transportation fees, internal transportation and accommodation, and providing pastoral care. Employers are only allowed to qualify for the program if they maintain certain high quality labor standards and they prove they have exhausted the pool of possible New Zealanders in searching for labor.¹⁶² The program is made possible because of its strong emphasis on fostering relationships between the New Zealand government and the

¹⁵⁸ World Bank, "Maximizing Development Impacts"

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Underhill-Sem, Yvonne J, Evelyn Marsters, and New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research. *Labour Mobility in the Pacific: A Systematic Literature Review of Development Impacts*, 2017. http://natlib-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/NLNZ:NLNZ:NLNZ_ALMA11305597230002836.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

governments of labor-sending countries. In 2016, the three largest labor-sending countries were Vanuatu, Tonga, and Samoa, which accounted for 87% of program participation.¹⁶³

Like with the SWP, the RSE has provided income benefits to labor-sending households but it comes at a price. The cost of joining the program, traveling to the destination country, and sorting out visas can account for up to 20 percent of the total income gained from the program, even despite cost sharing from employers.¹⁶⁴ Coupled with weekly expenses and taxes, less than half of the total average income made by participants is remitted. There are other problems with the program: cap space is determined based on the needs of New Zealand companies which means it is plagued by instability, so PICs cannot rely on the program to produce results in the long-term.¹⁶⁵ Another issue is that workers suffer from high transaction costs in remitting money. Lastly, there is a substantial chance for exploitation of the participants, as they are forced to adopt cultural norms of New Zealand and may not be treated as equals to citizens.¹⁶⁶ A comprehensive analysis of the RSE program determined that despite the several problems with the program, it delivers a net benefit-- there is, however, significant room for optimization of the benefits.¹⁶⁷

Remittances

This section seeks to examine the past effects of remittances, as many temporary migration schemes seek to improve the quality of life in labor-sending countries through remittances. The empirics mostly support remittances, but there are some gray areas. Case studies in Tonga and Samoa found that remittances from permanent migration have reduced the incidence of poverty by 31 percent and reduced the depth of poverty by 49 percent, and that remittances increase liquidity in labor-sending economies.¹⁶⁸¹⁶⁹ Other findings qualify the benefits of remittances: one study

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Bailey, Rochelle. "New Zealand's Recognised Employer Scheme (RSE): 10 Year Longitudinal Case Study." Australian National University, 2019. http://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/uploads/2019-06/new_zealands_recognised_employer_scheme_rse_10_year_longitudinal_case_study.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Jimenez-Soto, Eliana V., and Richard P. C. Brown. "Assessing the Poverty Impacts of Migrants' Remittances Using Propensity Score Matching: The Case of Tonga*." *Economic Record* 88, no. 282 (2012): 425–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4932.2012.00824.x>.

¹⁶⁹ Jayaraman, T. K., Chee-Keong Choong, and Ronald Kumar. 1. "CASE STUDY: Role of Remittances in Tongan Economy". *Migration Letters* 7 (2):224-30. <https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v7i2.195>.

suggests that remittances are important in economic growth, but must be accompanied by low-cost and easy-to-use money transfer methods and training or guidance in labor-sending communities for how to use the money in the best way possible.¹⁷⁰ Thus, the answer to the effectiveness of remittances is murky. Most evidence currently in circulation—including the studies mentioned in this section—discuss only remittances coming from permanent migrants. Very little research has been done about remittances from temporary schemes in the Pacific, and thus the only evidence to go off of is the preliminary results of the RSE program in New Zealand and the SWP in Australia.

¹⁷⁰ Underhill-Sem, Marsters, and New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research, *Labour Mobility in the Pacific*.

Possible Solutions

Introduction

Several solutions exist to the mobility problems in the Pacific. In this section a few possible solution areas will be discussed, but not to the same level of detail that is expected during the conference. It would be most productive to use these solutions as starting-points for further research.

Public-private partnerships (PPP)

Where the public sector proves inadequate, the private sector often beckons. In the case of the Pacific, sound use of the private sector could be a way to develop infrastructure in an innovative and sustainable manner. These **public-private partnerships** would take the form of contractual agreements between various investors and the governments of Pacific nations. The level of involvement of the private company would depend on the nature of the contract, as contracts exist on a spectrum from a private company merely paying the bills to a private company doing all of the construction as well. The hopeful results from these partnerships would be that resources are used efficiently, the quality of assets and services improves, and the public sector manages its infrastructure better.¹⁷¹ In these partnerships, government payments are only issued in the event of successful construction of the infrastructure in question, guaranteeing fast, good quality construction.¹⁷²

Public-private partnerships have a tremendous potential to improve Pacific countries, but they are yet to be taken advantage of. In a study of the readiness of countries in Asia and the Pacific to engage in PPPs (where Papua New Guinea, one of the most economically strong countries in the Pacific, was the Pacific representative), Papua New Guinea was ranked in the nascent phase, meaning they had not yet built a framework to accommodate such partnerships.¹⁷³ This is troublesome, as PPPs can be used to address nearly every of the UN's sustainable development

¹⁷¹ Asian Development Bank. "Overview: Public-Private Partnerships," April 10, 2017. <https://www.adb.org/site/public-private-partnerships/overview>.

¹⁷² Pacific Partnerships. "Our Services." CIMIC Group, n.d. <https://www.pacificpartnerships.com.au/en/public-private-partnerships/our-services>.

¹⁷³ "Country Readiness Diagnostic for Public-Private Partnerships." World Bank Group, June 2016. <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/943711467733900102/Country-PPP-Readiness-Diagnostic-Tool.pdf>.

goals.¹⁷⁴ In looking to develop PPPs to solve infrastructure questions, the committee should seek to adopt practices that attract investors such as more transparent governance. This solution is not a be-all, end-all, however, since many countries do not have the required economic status or potential to attract investors.

A Pacific-wide temporary migration scheme

Temporary migration schemes have shown encouraging results but still have problems. A Pacific-wide program that seeks to involve equal proportions of workers from all countries and reaches even rural and poorer workers in PICs would help to alleviate poverty. The program could take a similar structure to the SWP and the RSE program and it could include more country partnerships. It is important that any such scheme removes barriers for entry into the program. One way to do this would be by establishing an easy-to-use online application system, which, so long as it is accompanied by ICT improvements, would reach the more rural areas of PICs. It would be useful to also reduce expenses associated with the program. This could look like governments subsidizing travel or lowering costs involved in the visa application process. As remittances are most successful when spent appropriately by labor-sending households, some sort of program to teach the best way to create economic growth in small communities would be useful. The potential harms of such a program are difficult to diagnose, as there is so little evidence describing the empirical effects of temporary migration schemes--most studies focus on permanent migration, as it is more common in the Pacific. Thus, if designing a temporary migration program, nations must be careful to consider the possible negative effects.

Pacific investment and savings accounts

One shortcoming of remittances is that remitted money is subject to hefty transaction costs. An area to investigate is some form of retirement or savings account specifically for participants in temporary migration schemes. Ideally, these accounts would have lower transaction costs than current money-transfer options, and would be easy to access. Use of savings accounts held in Pacific banks could also spur economic growth as there would be more money to loan out to entrepreneurs

¹⁷⁴ "Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific." UNESCAP, 2016. <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/PPP%20and%20SDGs%20Draft%2020%20December.pdf>.

looking to begin a new operation. Providing tax benefits to these accounts could help to incentivize the use of them. No Pacific banking improvement would be possible without financial literacy courses, however, so investigating this avenue would require the government to provide financial literacy training to citizens.¹⁷⁵ This financial literacy training could be a mandatory part of participation in a temporary migration scheme. Importantly, this solution would not fit for poorer PICs, as many countries do not have the resources to set up financial infrastructure.

¹⁷⁵ Gibson, John, David J. McKenzie, and Bilal Zia. "The Impact of Financial Literacy Training for Migrants." SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, May 1, 2012. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2062102>.

Bloc Positions

Introduction

How countries form blocs to create solutions depends largely on the size of each country's economy and what its primary development needs are. Some countries, like Australia and New Zealand, are more developed and will thus have different needs from, say, Kiribati, one of the poorest nations in the region. These bloc positions will be generalized based on the size of the economy of each nation. These in no way are a prescription for how blocs ought to be formed in committee, but they should give a general idea of how to begin researching solutions based on a given country.

Small Labor Schemes

Countries like Australia and New Zealand that are developed, have strong economies, and even have discretion to give out aid will have regional priorities based on further bolstering their economies. Evidence of this mentality comes from the stipulations in their temporary work schemes: migrant labor is only accepted when all appropriate national labor has been exhausted. Thus, smaller labor schemes or programs that require minimal investment from labor-receiving countries but that provide substantial economic benefit are preferred, and benefits to labor-sending countries tend to be of secondary focus. Furthermore, labor-receiving countries may often find it easier and less invasive to grant aid to smaller PICs in lieu of more complicated programs, but will be hesitant to do so if the aid is not well-apportioned upon arrival in the country. Thus, these larger countries would likely also support formal changes to aid distribution and prioritization in smaller PICs.

Foreign aid

Similar to the previous topic, some countries may look favorably upon foreign aid and cooperation—especially smaller developing countries such as: Niue, Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Federated States of Micronesia. Again, foreign aid could come in a variety of different ways. Most commonly it appears in the form of financial aid, but it is not unlikely to receive aid from foreign countries to implement or support policies, initiatives, NGOs, or other organizations committed to helping but are lacking in resources and support. However, handling of aid hasn't been done perfectly in the past so ensuring

that it is used correctly is important to ensure that any foreign aid is utilized to its highest potential in helping the PIC. Figuring out which countries get aid is also important and could determine what countries would support or go against seeking foreign aid. In the past, since countries like Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Vanuatu received less aid per capita, they are more likely to be against foreign aid propositions unless they could receive the same amount of aid per capita as other countries.

Internal Improvements

Large, developing, labor sending countries such as Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, and Samoa would favor policies and programs that help to develop the country domestically. Public-private partnerships to improve infrastructure, temporary migration schemes to increase the pool of domestic skilled laborers, and other such programs that help to develop the countries and prepare them to succeed without the need for substantial foreign aid are preferred. These larger economies would need to find a way to encourage private investment, which might require measures to improve government transparency and accountability. Financial infrastructure would be favored as a way to provide economic stability to households. Many of these countries still receive aid, so they might also appreciate a new approach to the way aid is given, so as to no longer fall into the aid trap that has helped cause the status-quo economic woes of PICs.

Improving Migration Costs and Improving Basic Necessities

Many countries do not yet have the luxury to discuss economic growth, for they are not imbued with many natural resources and are dealt a difficult geographical blow. This description encompasses countries like Kiribati, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Palau, Niue, French Polynesia, the Cook Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. In these countries, GDP is low and access to basic necessities is limited. Much of the GDP is made up of money received through remittances, so migration schemes of any sort are required. Permanent schemes might be more beneficial than temporary ones, because permanent ones ensure a consistent flow of money, and the problem of a simple lack of opportunities--for skilled or unskilled workers--trumps the problem of labor mismatch. Migration costs, such as transportation and housing, are a substantial barrier for entry into migration programs for these countries, so sorting out some sort of transportation cost aid is important. Furthermore,

private sector investment is difficult to attract in these countries that lack natural resources, so an efficient aid program to deal with infrastructure development is favored to public-private partnerships.

Glossary

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): the designation given to when a firm or individual in one country makes an investment into business interests in another country

Informal economy: the diversified set of economic activities, enterprises, jobs, and workers that are not regulated or protected by the state. The concept originally applied to self-employment in small unregistered enterprises. It has been expanded to include wage employment in unprotected jobs

Infrastructure: the construction, operation, and renovation of physical structures that provide a platform for most other economic activities which includes telecommunications, electricity, water and waste services, roads and public works programs, ports and airports, and shipping and aviation services

MIRAB: a model of an economy that is characterized by migration, remittances, foreign aid, and public bureaucracy

Mismatch: a labor market condition where there are lots of skilled labor positions but not enough skilled laborers, and lots of unskilled laborers without enough unskilled labor positions

Non-revenue water: a measure of efficiency of water use, that measures the amount of water in the supply that is not billed to people

Official Development Assistance (ODA): a measure of all international aid flows into a country

Pastoral care: a contemporary term for an ancient model of emotional, social, and spiritual support

PICs: an acronym referring to all of the Pacific Island countries

Real GDP growth: economic growth as it relates to the gross domestic product (GDP) from one period to another, adjusted for inflation

Remittances: a transfer of money often sent by a foreign worker to an individual in their home country

Remoteness: the trade-weighted average of a country's distance from world markets, or a quantification of the economic strain of being far from other countries

Teledensity: the number of telephone connections for every hundred individuals living in an area

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