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Climate Change Cook Islands  
Office of the Prime Minister

***Climate Change Negotiations Workshop 9 – 12 August***

The climate change negotiations workshop in partnership with the Cook Islands National Council of Women kicked off to a great start on Tuesday morning 9<sup>th</sup> of August. In welcoming the participants and facilitators, the CINCW President Vaine Wichman challenged the participants of ninety eight percent women to take the momentum all the way to the international stage. Vaine encouraged the young girls to be strong, stay focussed, embrace the opportunity to learn and be proud to represent their country as they will be the future decision makers and leaders.



***Krystina and Alana practicing on their negotiation skills***

According to resource persons Ms Diane McFadzien and Ms Rueanna Haynes, good preparation is essential with a good understanding of national positions before attending a COP meeting. A good negotiator will also take it upon themselves to learn about other countries' position particularly countries similar to the Cook Islands. These were some useful tips participants learned at the workshop, besides, protocols, how the COP functions, its processes and the many different regional groups, contact groups, different meetings and their purposes, how a decision is reached at a COP and many more know how to prepare one to attend a COP. These workshops are

very useful considering many Cook Islanders who had attended previous COPs didn't have the same opportunity for such training.



***Closed contact group simulation***



***Rueanna Haynes of Climate Analytics facilitating the workshop***



***Diane McFadzien facilitating a group activity***

We thank our partners CINCW, GCF, SPREP, Climate Analytics for assisting, providing expertise personnel and co-hosting the workshop.

## *A news release from the GCF*

SUVA, REPUBLIC OF FIJI, 3 Aug 2016 - **The Green Climate Fund (GCF) this week welcomed over 170 representatives from Pacific Islands countries, Accredited Entities to the GCF, development partners, civil society and the private sector to the Pacific Regional Meeting. The meeting was co-hosted by Australia and the GCF.**

Co-Chair of the GCF Board, Ewen McDonald, opened the high-level segment in the presence of Pacific Leaders and Ministers by stating, 'The Pacific Islands are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, and are making efforts towards reducing emissions and climate-resilient development. The Green Climate Fund exists to support that transformation and this workshop will help Pacific Island countries access this finance'.

Co-Chair Zaheer Fakir added, 'This workshop is a key part of the Fund's efforts to work with countries and accredited entities to attract high quality, ambitious and paradigm-shifting funding proposals. The Board has already approved over USD400 million in funding approvals, and we aim to reach USD2.5 billion in approvals by our final Board meeting for 2016 in Apia, Samoa in December.'

Ministers and regional partners recognised the good progress the Pacific region has made in securing over US\$68 million in GCF funding to date. Participants shared experiences in accessing GCF funding and identified key areas that could improve the region's access to the GCF, including strengthening country capacity, improving coordination and developing strong partnerships.

The event has contributed to building a pipeline of Pacific proposals for the GCF, with a range of potential proposal ideas across themes such as water, energy, strengthening resilience, and transport.

At the technical workshop over the last two days of the meeting, Pacific Island countries worked with Accredited Entities and other partners to further develop key ideas into proposals so they can be ready for GCF Board consideration later this year, and beyond. This included practical discussions on potential regional programmes including in renewable energy, energy efficiency, insurance, and oceans.

Participants developed a Pacific GCF roadmap that identified a range of potential country and regional

level proposals to be prepared for GCF consideration. The roadmap, coupled with strong partnerships and networks formed during the Pacific Regional Meeting, will help maintain the momentum for the Pacific towards realising its ambition and maximising benefits for the region with the GCF.



## ***Workshop focuses on catastrophe risk assessment – by EMCI***



***Participants at the PCRAFI workshop 13 July***

Organised by Emergency Management Cook Islands, the three-day long workshop was aimed at preparing countries for natural disasters and climate change.

Emergency Management Cook Islands director Charles Carlson said the workshop would help educate participants on the usage of Pacific Catastrophe Risk Information System (PacRIS) and its potential use in disaster management.

"Overall, the objective of the PCRAFI project is to provide Pacific Island countries with an upgraded disaster and climate risk information platform and enhance their capacity to use it and develop an associated series of risk management applications for enhanced disaster risk reduction, risk management, risk adjusted development planning and risk financing decision-making.

"Not only does the programme prepare us for disasters, it also allows us to reduce the negative impact of such hazards and how we respond.



PCRAFI coordinator Norene Iyehen, said PCRAFI had been developed to provide enhance risk modelling and disaster financing for Pacific Island countries.

PCRAFI is a joint initiative of SPC, SPC-GSD, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, the Japanese government and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). Technical support has been provided by AIR Worldwide, NZ GNS Science, Geoscience Australia, the Pacific Disaster Centre (PDC), Open Geo and GFDRR Labs.

### ***World Humanitarian Day 19<sup>th</sup> August – by EMCI***



*Participants Honouring World Humanitarian Heroes, 19 August*

“They are our heroes.” These were the words of New Zealand High Commissioner to the Cook Islands Nick Hurley at the commemoration of World Humanitarian Day. The day’s event, held at the Cook Islands Red Cross Society headquarters in Tupapa, was a partnership effort between the Government of the Cook Islands and Non-Government Organisations. The day’s focus is to honour and acknowledge the brave efforts by humanitarian aid workers in areas of crises.

Nick Hurley mentioned in his speech that the United Nations predicts that more than 130 million people across the globe need humanitarian assistance just to survive.

In particular he highlighted the Cooks vulnerability to increasing numbers of natural disasters with the Pacific classified as a top four on the world risk index. He adds that World Humanitarian Day is a time to commit to making it easier for aid workers to operate wherever they are. Prime Minister’s Office chief of staff Liz Koteka commented, “There is someone somewhere that needs a hand up.” She shared highlights from the first Humanitarian Summit held in Turkey recently where light was shed on some of the struggles of humanitarian workers as well as some of the success stories. Charles Carlson from Emergency Management Cook

Islands and Rangi Johnson representing the Civil Society also shared their humanitarian works and views.

### ***SRIC CC Projects funded by the Adaptation Fund***

#### ***Progress on Pukapuka Island- report by Lucky Topetai***

Fencing and drainage for the community taro project on Pukapuka Island is almost complete according to SRIC Focal Point, Lucky Topetai. Men from the Tawa Raro and Tawa Ngake villages were kept busy over the last few months erecting fences and building culverts to ensure their taro plantation will no longer be damaged by wondering animals and from flood waters.



*Pukapuka men hard at work putting the culverts in place, August*



*Women and young girls working in the taro plantation fenced off from wondering pigs, August (Photos by Lucky Topetai)*

Planting taro on Pukapuka Island is mainly a woman’s role and responsibility. At a young age girls learn to work in the taro patch by following their mothers, grandmas or aunties to the taro plantation, and by



observing, doing and listening to them the practice is passed down to the young generation. However today, planting taro is more like a family affair where the men and young boys do the more labour intensive work. Taro is the main root crop on Pukapuka, hence an important food source, therefore the protection of taro plantation is necessary to ensure food security



*Finally, culverts in place that will drain flooding water from the community taro plantation*

### ***Mangaia carrots hit the market***

MGLAI Mangaia young farmers harvested their first crop of carrots last week for the Mangaia market. Carrot is one crop that doesn't grow well in Rarotonga, but the ones grown in Mangaia proves the potential of farming carrots on a large scale to meet the demand in Raro, which usually is imported.



*Young Farmers harvesting carrots for the Raro market*

Another crop growing really well in Mangaia is the zucchini which the young farmers reckon will be ready for the Raro market in a few weeks' time. Other vegetables the young farmers are growing include, cucumbers, lettuce, cabbage, capsicum, tomatoes, cauliflower and broccoli. Most of the produce is sold on

order at the local market and doesn't make it to the Raro market. The plan is to increase production next year to supply both the Mangaia and Raro markets.



*Zuchinni crop in Mangaia – not quiet ready yet!*

### ***Monitoring and Evaluating SRIC Projects in the Pa Enua 17-19 August***

Climate Change Team led by SRIC Programme



Manager William Tuivaga and Melina Tuiravakai met with the various community groups in Mangaia whilst conducting the monitoring and evaluation of the SRIC projects. The team were on a tight schedule of 2 days to accomplish all their work, which they discovered was impossible to complete with the many requests they received from community groups and individuals wanting to meet with them and discuss new projects.

The overall feedback from community groups and individuals who were at some stage engaged with the SRIC project was positive, however, there is still room for improvement, harness new opportunities and leverage potential growth for a sustainable and resilient people.

According to the team, the people are happy with the variety of fresh vegetables available on their



island and wish to continue a strong engagement with the SRIC programme.

### ***Pitaka Project Tongareva- by Thomas Taime and Dr Michael White***

'The Tongareva student's Pitaka project is finally making movement', says our SRIC Focal Point, Thomas Taime. According to Thomas, the Island Council met on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August where Hakono Hararanga proposed a new site to construct the observatory shelter. This was supported by the Island Council who also offered to seek permission from the land owners and prepare the contract. Mean while work has again commenced on constructing the nursery that will grow the seedlings for the tree planting project.



***Tongareva men working on the tree nursery, for the Pitaka project***



***Picture provided by Dr Michael White, August***

Above is the new site where the turtle observatory hut will be erected on motu Mangarongaro. The observatory will also include a water-catchment as this centre will be used by both the school and community. It will serve as a centre to monitor the green sea turtle besides other conservation activities such as tree

planting. This project was proposed by the school students to provide a safe haven for nesting turtles and coastal protection through reforestation.

### ***Mauke SRIC Project***

Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup> August saw new beginnings to revive agriculture on the island of Mauke. According to the SRIC Focal Point for Mauke, Teariki Rongo, at the Island Council meeting, there was unanimous support for this initiative.



***Mauke Island Council, in front Mauke EO and SRIC Agriculture Consultant Makiroa Beniamina (Photo by Teariki Rongo)***

The SRIC team of Teariki and Makiroa were in Mauke from Monday 29 August – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept to meet and conduct several workshops with growers and interested individuals to develop the Mauke agriculture plan.



***Agriculture consultation 30 August (Photo by Teariki Rongo)***

Mauke was once a thriving agriculture hub, however over the years this has drastically plummeted due to several factors including depopulation, reduced market opportunities, high transportation costs and volatile climate conditions. The development of the Mauke agriculture plan is a step in the right direction

intended to rekindle interest and enthusiasm in agriculture. It is anticipated that the success of the MAGLAI youth agriculture project in Mangaia will be replicated in Mauke.

### **Dr Teina Rongo reports on his recent trip to Mangaia**

From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, Climate Change Advisor Teina Rongo travelled to Mangaia as part of a team funded by the Ridge to Reef project from the National Environment Service (NES) to initiate the consultation of the project in the various districts (puna). Because Mangaia has established several rau'i for both land and sea, members from the Ministry of Marine Resources and NES presented some opportunities to help the puna's monitor and manage their rau'i effectively. The team also introduced the Participatory three Dimensional (P3D) mapping exercises (a SRIC CC funded project that will commence in September), which will help the puna's plan their land activities. To assist in the P3D mapping the team identified important sites using a GPS to include all the rau'i boundaries, caves, lookout points...etc. In addition, the team took the opportunity to interview fishers to understand the changes observed in the last few decades and also raise the awareness of rau'i and climate change in the school.



Below are large patches of *Sargassum* sea weed, which are important food for many important food fish in the southern Cook Islands. For example, pipi (*Kyphosus* species), Ume (*Naso unicornis*), and the pauu/umoemoe (*Leptoscarus viagiensis*; above right). In the last few decades fishers have noticed a drastic decline in both the *Sargassum* and the pauu. However, according to fishers, *Sargassum* has increased on many

reef flat areas and some have spotted the pauu. Previous work by climate change Cook Islands suggested that these changes were the result of rainfall, associated with climate variability. In particular, reduced rainfall in the last 30 years may have caused the loss of many marine resources. With the expected shift into a warmer and wetter period, perhaps we are witnessing the return of marine resources that was once abundant 30 -40 years ago. At this point, it is important to understand whether or not these changes are directly linked to climate variability, so we can elucidate those that are caused by human activities as management differs accordingly.



**Top: *Sargassum* algae that are now growing well on the reef flat of Mangaia (photo by Teina Rongo). Bottom: is the Pauu/umoemoe which used to be common in the southern group along with the *Sargassum* algae (photo by Ian Banks).**

Below was a badly decomposed young whale with only the rear end remaining. According to residents, the whale had already decomposed when it was discovered; the picture was taken two weeks after it was discovered. Although whales are not hunted in the Cook Islands, the meat of stranded whales are usually cut-up and distributed among residents for consumption. During the visit to Mangaia, the sighting of whales appear to be consistent with other southern group islands which is higher than those observed on



Rarotonga. Whether whales are starting to avoid the high boating activities of Rarotonga is a question that needs to be answered through research.



***Badly decomposed carcass of a young whale was found stranded on the reef flat of Tavaenga puna in early July (photo by Teina Rongo, taken August 2016).***

### *Kura – Kuriri*

The Climate Change team of Mia Teaurima and Melina Tuiravakai will lead a team of six to Mangaia next week 5 – 9<sup>th</sup> Sept to conduct the P3D workshop. This workshop is fully funded by SRIC and implemented by the National Environment Service NES.

The SRIC team is kept busy these months as they embark on monitoring and evaluating the SRIC projects in the Pa Enua. So far the islands of Mangaia and Atiu were completed this month. The team plans to do one more southern island of Mitiaro, then move to the Northern islands of Manihiki and Rakahanga all to be completed in September.

Andreas Demmke from DCD and Edwin Apera from Ministry of Agriculture are off to South Korea in the first two weeks of September to attend a ghg IPCC guidelines training workshop. This training will help us with the preparation of the ghg and mitigation components of the Third National Communication report to the UNFCCC.

Celine Dyer and Ewan Cameron will be off to Samoa at the end of September to attend the Pacific High Level

Segment Meeting in preparation for the upcoming COP22.

Dr Teina Rongo will be heading out to Aitutaki from 5 - 9<sup>th</sup> Sept with the Pa Enua Division to undertake drought response assessment, community awareness and to work with the school.

The second last Platform meeting for the year is scheduled for Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September at the Cook Islands National Council of Women Headquarters in Tauae. Anyone is welcome to attend this informative forum.

**Till Next Time – Kia Manuia**

More photos from Mangaia by Melina Tuiravakai

