



UN  
DP

# Aspiring to a Resilient Pacific **2020 ANNUAL REPORT**



UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji



Tuvalu's Coast © UNDP Pacific Office

Cover image: A farmer returning from his plantation by canoe on the Northern Coastline of the island of Efate in Vanuatu. This is an example of using traditional farming practices for food security. (Photo: UNDP)

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AccLab</b>	Accelerator Lab	<b>HACT</b>	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
<b>AF</b>	Adaptation Fund	<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>APR</b>	Annual Programme Review	<b>HLPF</b>	High-Level Political Forum
<b>APTC</b>	Australia Pacific Training Coalition	<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>BAF</b>	Biosecurity Authority of Fiji	<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>BESS</b>	Battery Energy Storage System	<b>IAS</b>	Institute of Applied Science, University of the South Pacific
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer	<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>CPA</b>	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association	<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>CPP</b>	Country Preparedness Package	<b>IRENA</b>	International Renewable Energy Agency
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization/s	<b>KOICA</b>	Korea International Cooperation Agency
<b>DCR</b>	Disaster and Climate Resilience	<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicators
<b>EIF</b>	Enhanced Integrated Framework	<b>LDC</b>	Least Developed Country
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>LDCF</b>	Least Developed Country Fund
<b>EVAWG</b>	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls	<b>LLIN</b>	Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	<b>M4C</b>	Markets for Change Project
<b>FBO</b>	Final Budget Outcome	<b>MAL</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Solomon Islands)
<b>FEMM</b>	Forum Economic Ministers Meeting	<b>MCT</b>	Micronesia Conservation Trust
<b>FHTA</b>	Fiji Hotels and Tourism Association	<b>MDTF</b>	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
<b>FICAC</b>	Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption	<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>FMS</b>	Fiji Meteorological Services	<b>MRV</b>	Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification
<b>FPLAC</b>	Tonga Family Protection Legal Aid Centre (Tonga)	<b>MSME</b>	Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises
<b>FPSP</b>	Fiji Parliament Support Project	<b>NAPA</b>	National Adaptation Program of Action (Vanuatu)
<b>FSM</b>	Federated States of Micronesia	<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contributions
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund	<b>NDMO</b>	National Disaster Management Office
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product	<b>NEMO</b>	National Emergency Management Office (Tonga)
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based Violence	<b>NERM</b>	National Energy Roadmap (Vanuatu)
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility	<b>NES</b>	National Emergency Services (Nauru)
<b>GESI</b>	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization/s
<b>GFATM</b>	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria		
<b>GFCR</b>	Global Fund for Coral Reefs		
<b>GGGI</b>	Global Green Growth Institute		

<b>PCR</b>	Polymerase chain reaction	<b>SPTO</b>	Pacific Tourism Organization
<b>PDNA</b>	Post Disaster Needs Assessment	<b>SRPD</b>	Sub-Regional Programme Document
<b>PERF</b>	Pacific Early Recovery Fund	<b>TANGO</b>	Tuvalu Association of Non-Government Organizations
<b>PIC</b>	Pacific Island Countries	<b>TB</b>	Tuberculosis
<b>PICT</b>	Pacific Island Countries and Territories	<b>TC</b>	Tropical Cyclone
<b>PIFS</b>	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	<b>TCAP</b>	Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project
<b>PFIP</b>	Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme	<b>TNCW</b>	Tuvalu National Council of Women
<b>POETcom</b>	Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community	<b>TNYC</b>	Tonga National Youth Congress
<b>POIDIER</b>	Promoting Outer Island Development through the Integrated Energy Roadmap project	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>PoWER</b>	Renewable Energy Power Project	<b>UN75</b>	United Nations 75th Anniversary Project
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment	<b>UNCDF</b>	United Nations Capital Development Fund
<b>PPEI</b>	Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative	<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>PSO</b>	Public Solicitor's Office (Solomon Islands)	<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>R2R</b>	Ridge to Reef Project	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>RC</b>	United Nations Resident Coordinator	<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>RCO</b>	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office	<b>UNESCAP</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
<b>RFF</b>	Rapid Financing Facility	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>REACH</b>	Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion Mobile Service Delivery Platform	<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>RESPAC</b>	Disaster Resilience for Pacific Small Island Developing States project	<b>UNOCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>RMI</b>	Republic of the Marshall Islands	<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>RTI</b>	Right to Information	<b>UNPRAC</b>	United National Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption Project
<b>SCCF</b>	Special Climate Change Fund	<b>UNPS</b>	United Nations Pacific System
<b>SEforALL</b>	Sustainable Energy for All	<b>UNU</b>	United Nations University
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal(s)	<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Reporting
<b>SEIA</b>	Socio-Economic Impacts Assessment	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>SGDIA</b>	School of Government, Development and International Affairs, University of the South Pacific		
<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing States		
<b>SIICAC</b>	Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against Corruption		
<b>SLIP</b>	Strengthening Legislatures in the Pacific project		
<b>SMARTEN</b>	Supporting Mainstreamed Achievement of Roadmap Targets on Energy in Nauru project		
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedures		
<b>SPC</b>	The Pacific Community		

## Aspiring to a Resilient Pacific

The scale of the crises of 2020 highlighted the urgent need to make progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Decreasing the vulnerability of individuals and communities by improving sustainable livelihoods, supporting the efficient delivery of public services, and safeguarding and reviving the natural environment will improve resistance to viruses and resilience in the face of the global economic downturn and frequent severe natural disasters.

The COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately caused a regression against some of the SDGs. The UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji (hereafter referred to as UNDP Pacific Office or Pacific Office) has, through its thematic programmes, its Six Signature Solutions and its Climate Promise, and specialist support to Small Island Developing States, proposed a variety of interventions that not only address the urgent and immediate needs of member countries, but will either reset their path to the achievement of the SDGs or help keep them on track in the face of unrelenting economic and climate pressures.

The UNDP Pacific Office with its valued donors and stakeholders, supports the national priorities and aspirations of the countries and territories of the Pacific, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Women catching octopus from a harvesting zone between “Tabu” areas where all fishing and harvesting of seafood is banned and the marine life can regenerate. As a community led and managed marine area in their traditional fishing area, the system has allowed the community to benefit economically from a sustainable marine resource. (Photo: UNDP)

Foreword by  
**Levan Bouadze**  
Resident Representative  
UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji



This Annual Report for the UNDP Pacific Office is the first that has been issued since 2016. It just so happens that we have revived this reporting following a most unexpected and very challenging year. The theme of this report, “Aspiring for a Resilient Pacific” is meant to convey our optimism for a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for Pacific Island Countries and Territories, and our determination to make an important contribution to that vision. That optimism and ambition for this region was our anchor through the most difficult of times in 2020.

*Our 10 member countries navigated both the wide-ranging impacts of a global pandemic and severe tropical cyclones during 2020. The UNDP Pacific Office worked diligently to provide support and was available at every point to offer guidance, analysis, expertise, funding, and, sometimes the most important of inputs-encouragement and solidarity.*

In collaboration with a wide range of development partners, the UNDP Pacific Office provided targeted assistance through three thematic areas, namely Effective Governance, Inclusive Growth, and Resilience and Sustainable Development. While programming in those areas was designed to address country priorities and the SDGs, it was clear even before the pandemic was declared that the achievement of the SDGs would require more intense and accelerated efforts. While our plans, under normal circumstances, would have supported that upscaling, the events of the year, including the pandemic and climate change-induced natural disasters, unfortunately reversed some of the SDG progress that had been made.

We must, however, remain undeterred in our mission to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The year 2020 cannot knock us off course, though it has certainly required an “adjustment of the sails”, so to say. We did well to adapt our programmes and achieved some important results for the region in 2020. While this Annual Report details the main achievements of each thematic area, I would like to highlight just a few here.

## INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The UNDP Pacific Office responded to the pandemic by immediately programming US\$9 million to address health sector needs and assess socio-economic impacts. In partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the UNDP Pacific Office provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hospital waste management support, and medical equipment. This timely assistance ensured that immediate health needs were met and safeguarded the most vulnerable.

UNDP also supported the UN Country Team (UNCT) to carry out a Socio-Economic Impacts Assessment (SEIA) for Fiji. The UNDP Pacific Office developed a rapid policy appraisal tool to analyze the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 to inform policies.

## EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Governance programming, adapted in light of travel restrictions, facilitated national elections in Kiribati, Palau, and Vanuatu, and two by-elections in Solomon Islands. UNDP provided a range of support, including civic and voter education and initiatives to encourage women's participation and representation in law-making bodies. In Vanuatu, this resulted in the highest voter turnout (69%) since 1983, and four women members were elected to the 50-seat parliament in Solomon Islands (up from three previously).

UNDP provided ICT equipment to the parliaments of Cooks Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu so that they could continue to meet. UNDP also assisted with the development of business continuity plans.

## RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The economic downturn associated with COVID-19 made it more difficult than ever for this region to adapt to the impacts of Climate Change and fund recovery from natural disasters. UNDP supported 9,000 households with livelihoods recovery, community infrastructure, early warning systems, and Post-Disaster Needs assessment after Tropical Cyclone Harold in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.



UNDP supports early recovery efforts across the Pacific as part of its Resilience and Sustainable Development focus area.

UNDP also assisted with institutional capacity building; Vanuatu adopted the 2020-2023 Recovery Strategy through UNDP support and five (5) Pacific Island countries were assisted with enhancing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). UNDP assisted RMI with the development of its National Strategic Plan 2020-2030 and Tonga was supported to establish a Resilient Development Financing Division in its Ministry of Finance.

## PROGRESS IN PARTNERSHIP

The achievement of the 2030 Agenda was never going to be easy, and the unprecedented scale of the year's challenges needed to be met with innovation, energy, and a collective resolve. This is where UNDP Pacific Office succeeded, using a "whole of system" collaborative approach. The Pacific Office embarked on a rapid re-orientation and re-programming, which showcased both our agility and our commitment to our member countries and their peoples.

I am very proud of all the UNDP Pacific Office staff and stakeholders that responded to the stress and uncertainty of the year in a calm and productive manner, balancing the imperative to make progress on development plans whilst addressing the immediate pandemic-related needs of member countries. For our significant contribution to gender equality in terms of management, programmes, communications, and results, the Pacific Office was even awarded a 2020 Bronze Gender Equality Seal by UNDP Headquarters. That was an important endorsement of our work to advance women's rights in all areas.

In December, we invited our Fiji-based partners and stakeholders to an Appreciation Event to celebrate the progress that we made, in spite of everything, during 2020. This special event highlighted UNDP's leadership and the vital contributions that we make, connecting a wide variety of stakeholders, sharing our expertise, and accelerating progress and achievement by integrating the SDGs and cross-cutting issues in everything we do.

It was also a way to convey our gratitude to our partners, a gratitude that, I hope, is also reflected in this report. While this Annual Report presents a snapshot of UNDP's successes in 2020, it is important to acknowledge that the Pacific Office did not work alone. Its accomplishments are very much shared with valued country partners, donors, and private sector and civil society stakeholders.

In conclusion, one can be hopeful that 2021 will start to see a global recovery from the pandemic. The UNDP Pacific Office has undertaken to ensure that member countries can access all the tools, technology, and resources required to share in that recovery. By adapting its programming to meet urgent needs and deliver results in challenging circumstances, and aspiring for a better future for the Pacific region through the SDGs, UNDP aims to improve the lives and livelihoods of Pacific peoples.



**Levan Bouadze**

Resident Representative  
UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji

# About Us



## GLOBAL MISSION AND MANDATE

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations agency mandated to eliminate poverty, reduce inequalities, support good governance and the rule of law, and promote social and economic inclusion. It works successfully in 170 countries in concert with UN agencies and public and private sector stakeholders to deliver tangible results for its member countries. UNDP is the UN's lead agency on Climate Change and drives progress towards the 2030 Agenda, which calls for the timely achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

## UNDP PACIFIC OFFICE

The UNDP Pacific Office provides targeted support to ten (10) countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu). It provides regional support to four countries that are covered by the Samoa Multi-Country Office including Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau. UNDP also has staff in Kiribati, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu through the Joint Presence Initiative. The total population served is 2.4 million.

In addition to its headquarters in Suva, Fiji, the UNDP Pacific Office has a physical presence in Solomon Islands, which is headed by a Country Manager. UN Volunteers, a stand-alone office in Suva, is overseen by the UNDP Pacific Office.

In addition to having three thematic teams with regional and country portfolios, the Pacific Office has an Integrated Results Management Unit (IRMU) with responsibility for Monitoring and Evaluation, Quality Assurance, and Communications. The Operations Centre at the UNDP Pacific Office provides business support to UNDP and some other UN agencies.

## EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM



**Mr. Levan Bouadze**  
Resident Representative



**Mr. Kevin Petrini**  
Deputy Resident  
Representative a.i.



**Mr. Berdi Berdiyev**  
Country Manager  
for Solomon Islands



**Ms. Revai  
Makanje Aalbaek**  
Team Leader for  
Effective Governance



**Mr. Patrick  
Tuimalealiifano**  
Deputy Team Leader  
for Inclusive Growth



**Ms. Winifereti  
Nainoca**  
Team Leader a.i. for  
Resilience & Sustainable  
Development



**Ms. Nasantuya  
Chuluun**  
Operations and  
Implementation  
Support Advisor



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**Pacific Countries  
Regional &  
Country Support**

Federated States of Micronesia,  
Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the  
Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau,  
Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu,  
and Vanuatu.



5

**Pacific Countries  
Regional Support**

Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa,  
Tokelau and PNG.



2

**Offices - Fiji &  
Solomon Islands**



195

Staff present in  
the Pacific



72

UN Volunteers served  
in 14 countries in the  
Pacific in 2020



200+

Virtual meetings held

**CORPORATE ACHIEVEMENTS**



Successfully operated  
remotely and adapted  
programming to  
cater for immediate  
COVID-19 related  
health support



US\$9 million from  
donors for COVID-19  
response



Rapidly developed  
eight COVID-19  
projects to be ready  
for donors



**Awarded Bronze  
Gender Seal** by UNDP  
Headquarters Bronze  
Office for commitment  
to and achievement  
in advancing gender  
equality

# Strategic Direction



## UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021

UNDP's global policy document, UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-2021, focuses on eradicating poverty, accelerating structural transformations, and building resilience to shocks and crises.

To achieve those outcomes, UNDP works in six priority areas, on what is known as Signature Solutions.

All of the Solutions include policy guidance, technical assistance, funding, and programmes. The Solutions are essentially coherent and well-integrated targeted offers of assistance, designed to work together to improve progress toward the SDGs.



## THE UN PACIFIC STRATEGY

The work of the UNDP Pacific Office is aligned to the UN System's Pacific Strategy, which covers all UN agencies and aims to achieve the following by 2022:

*"...people and ecosystems in the Pacific are more resilient to the impacts of climate change, climate variability and disasters; and environmental protection is strengthened"*

*"...people in the Pacific, in particular youth, women, and vulnerable groups, benefit from inclusive and sustainable economic development that creates decent jobs, reduces multidimensional poverty and inequalities, and promotes economic empowerment."*

*"....people and communities in the Pacific will contribute to and benefit from inclusive, informed and transparent decision-making processes, accountable and responsive institutions and improved"*



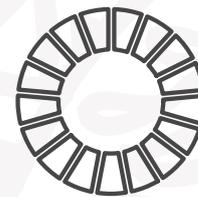
A market vendor stands in front of her stall in Vanuatu (Photo: UNDP/PFIP)

## UNDP PACIFIC OFFICE STRATEGY

The Pacific Office has its own strategic programming plan known as the Sub-regional Programme Document (SRPD) for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories 2018-2022.

The SRPD is designed to assist countries make progress towards the SDGs based on their own priorities by focusing on data-driven policies, participatory planning, and inclusive budgeting and monitoring. To deliver the outcomes and outputs of the SRPD, the Pacific Office organizes its work in the three thematic areas of Effective Governance, Inclusive Growth, and Resilience and Sustainable Development and promotes its commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

# Advancing the 2030 Agenda



Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a resolution focused on achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The UNDP Pacific Office works in conjunction with other UN agencies to deliver a sustainable, results-based programme in support of that agenda and the national priorities of our 10 member countries. We aspire to make progress towards this agenda even while managing the impacts of COVID-19.



## IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON THE REGION

As technical lead for the socio-economic response to COVID-19 in the Pacific, UNDP was positioned as a connector and integrator, able to quickly address urgent pandemic-related needs while maintaining course towards the 2030 Agenda. Prior to the pandemic, there had been some good progress made towards achieving the SDGs, but most goals were not on track to be completely achieved.

Border closures and movement restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 caused severe social and economic disruptions. Attention and efforts previously dedicated to mainstreaming the SDGs into national planning and reporting processes were redirected to the urgent public health response. With high prevalence in their populations of the pre-existing conditions that make COVID-19 fatal, community transmission of the virus in PICTs would have had devastating effects. The pandemic situation would have been much worse if PICTs hadn't taken such quick action to protect their people.

Tourism was obliterated, exports significantly declined, and remittances were impacted; fisheries and fishing licenses also declined, but to a lesser extent than the other areas. The Pacific Office 10 member countries are highly exposed to global market dynamics and felt the impacts of COVID-19 lockdown around the world. The force of those negative impacts was intensified as the region was struck by severe tropical cyclones, the recovery from which diverted limited funds from the COVID-19 response.

While Vanuatu graduated from LDC status in December, and the other three LDCs in the region (Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and Tuvalu) have met the criteria for graduation, the unexpected challenges of 2020 shocked all of the region's economies. Poverty levels and inequality greatly increased, with SDG indicators sliding backwards in some areas. Decisive action is needed to halt this regression.



With thanks to the World Food Programme's Pacific Humanitarian Air Service and as part of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway for COVID-19, UNDP's Multicountry Western Pacific HIV/TB Programme shipped critical medical supplies to aid the pandemic response in Kiribati. (Photo: WFP/Allan Stephen)

## **Supporting a Sustainable Recovery**

Reacting to the pandemic was an intensive exercise of reprogramming, reworking, and resourcing. Funding was moved around, and UNDP's human resources were impacted, as some staff were stranded outside the region and others required repatriation. The reaction was not limited to addressing the unfolding crisis; UNDP also considered how best to deliver a well-resourced COVID-19 recovery package.

UNDP utilized its Six Signature Solutions, which are targeted packages of multi-layered technical guidance, sustainable development finance, and expert knowledge, to ensure that clear progress was shown towards the 2030 Agenda by all of its regional and country-specific projects and programmes during the year. Signature Solution 2 "Governance" was applied to programming in 2020, resulting in 14 parliaments in the Pacific receiving the technical advice and ICT equipment required to continue to sit and hold committee meetings during the pandemic.

## **Solevaka Platform**

Through the Pacific SDG engagement platform, known as the Solevaka Platform, the UNDP Pacific Office's Inclusive Governance Team mobilized resources from a variety of multilateral and regional organizations to conduct online consultations on the region's development challenges.

The Solevaka Platform supported many virtual meetings about the importance of accelerating progress against the SDGs. The discussions also highlighted the need to ensure that the large number of development partners working in this area use the partnership modality, pursue integrated solutions, and use funding and technical resources efficiently. The Platform had over 7,000 subscribers, affiliated with various development stakeholders, as at the end of December 2020. UNDP will continue to encourage the application of such digital modalities to address the region's challenges.

## **Data Collection and Reporting on SDG Progress**

UNDP, with its partners the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Community (SPC), supported enhanced data collection and reporting on SDGs through the provision of technical assistance and capacity building for the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to the Governments of FSM and Fiji. Guidance was provided on the reporting process, including the presentation of the VNR at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York in July. UNDP also supported the Republic of Marshall Islands to align and integrate SDGs into national development planning and reporting processes.

Through the VNRs reporting process, most Pacific countries have reflected on the type of disaggregated data they collect which is relevant to the SDG targets and indicators. It was recognized that there are gaps in official statistics that must be filled if governments intend to strengthen their monitoring and reporting against the SDGs. As a result, FSM and many other Pacific countries are devising National Statistics Development Strategies, with UNDP support, to ensure they can collect the quality and type of disaggregated data that they require in order to meet development commitments.

## **Looking Ahead: Delivering the 2030 Agenda**

During the 75th UN General Assembly, a High-Level Meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond was held in which SIDS leaders asserted that something similar to a Marshall Plan or SIDS Compact would be required for Small Island Developing States to be able to recover and prosper. Planning and funding the recovery is a formidable task that UNDP sees as a unique opportunity, a critical chance to embed sustainable development practices in all layers of government and society, in all countries, rich and poor.

To make up for the ground that was lost due to the pandemic, it was clear to UNDP that by the end of the year, while forward plans should be aligned to the 2030 Agenda, that alone would be insufficient. Opportunities related to 'Greening the Recovery' were explored to send a very strong message that the SDGs would need to be the core principles around which any post-COVID plans are created.

Plans for recovery should also be more thoroughly risk-informed than any previous ones, and must include a wider variety of risk treatments, with a greater focus on digitalization and diverse partnerships that include government, the private sector, and civil society. Pacific countries will be encouraged to access additional support in their recovery and development through UNDP's Global Initiatives, which include the Pacific SIDS Offer, which is presented in a later chapter of this report, and the UNDP Climate Promise.

## **UNDP's Climate Promise**

The Climate Promise is our commitment to ensure that any country wishing to increase the scale and ambition of their national pledge to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases is able to do so. Country partners can access the Climate Promise in addition to the support they receive through country-specific and regional programmes. The more energy and resources that are directed to addressing these most urgent needs, the better world for us all.

This Promise is backed up by UNDP's expansive technical expertise in energy, oceans, forests, water, resilience, agriculture, health, youth, finance, governance, gender equality and the green/blue economy. UNDP's experience in forging partnerships, sourcing funds, and designing policies, legislation, and results-based programmes and activities means that it is positioned well to provide any type of Climate Change support that is requested.



The newly installed solar panel system at Nayarabale village in Vanua Levu, Fiji that was community-funded and later reimbursed by the Government. (Photo: UNDP)

UNDP has agreed to Climate Promise workplans with 118 countries – making it the world’s largest offer of support for the enhancement of countries’ climate pledges. Five countries in the Pacific, namely Tonga, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Palau, have already signed up to the Climate Promise.

### ***Building Back Better***

The negative social and economic impacts of COVID-19 will be felt for at least the next few years and threaten the timely achievement of the SDGs, but this must not lessen our resolve to make progress towards the 2030 Agenda. The pandemic has actually underscored the importance of the SDGs; we must assist the most vulnerable and build resilience levels at individual, community, and national levels to increase the likelihood of a timely and complete recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

Insights from  
**Berdi Berdiyev**  
Country Manager for UNDP  
Solomon Islands



Never in the history of humankind have people been more united by one global topic in 2020. The year has taught us to adapt and make decisions quickly, but most importantly, to reinforce our commitment to leaving no one behind. As an organization, UNDP has consolidated its reputation as a trustworthy development partner in the collective effort of supporting national response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amidst the ups and downs of the year, UNDP continued to work side by side with all stakeholders in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focusing on reducing poverty and inequalities, modernizing institutions, digitally transforming communities, combating climate change and sustainably managing natural resources.

UNDP is honored to collaborate with a wide range of partners to support Pacific countries as they plan for and realize their visions of a more equitable and prosperous region, where everyone's voice, regardless of age, gender or disability, is counted and heard in decision-making and developing states' policies processes.

Here in Solomon Islands, the year 2020 has shown that UNDP has solid ties to the government, private sector, and civil society and links with people in rural communities throughout the country. With the 2030 Agenda as a guiding thread, UNDP aims to support development aspirations and actions in Solomon Islands. From communities affected by Tropical Cyclone Harold who benefitted from the improved water supply system to persons with disabilities who for the first time served as election observers, to residents of remote islands who gained easier access to justice services; from young women and men whose voices are heard and included in policies and decisions of the state, to fostered business continuity and connectivity during the COVID-19 state of emergency for central level and provincial institutions. Person by person, project by project, UNDP is part of a changing Pacific, one that celebrates its natural environment, traditions, and cultures while embracing the new possibilities through greater cooperation, innovation, and digital transformation on the path to sustainable development.

# Key Achievements of 2020



## In the region, UNDP and its Partners supported.....

- ✓ Five (5) Pacific countries to plan how to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions
- ✓ Pacific Women in Power Summit for Women MPs, convened in Brisbane pre-COVID
- ✓ Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion Mobile Service Delivery Platform (REACH) project, which provided humanitarian assistance, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), soap, and hygiene supplies to vulnerable groups, including people living in squatter settlements, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- ✓ Molecular testing for COVID-19 using GeneXpert instruments; over 59,672 COVID-19 tests were done in 11 PICs
- ✓ Creation of Anti-Corruption Toolkits aimed at women and youth in Fiji
- ✓ Virtual sessions of Pacific legislatures, with the FSM Congress being the first
- ✓ Development of the comprehensive Coconut Sector Development Strategy in Kiribati
- ✓ Establishment of the Private Sector Innovation Hub and Co-Working Space at the University of the South Pacific in the Republic of Marshall Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, to promote events and capacity building around youth entrepreneurship and innovation
- ✓ Development of a project to facilitate the achievement of Nauru's National Energy Road Map Targets
- ✓ Better disaster planning and preparation, including through the Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience through Improved Disaster Preparedness and Infrastructure project in Palau
- ✓ Women's representation at local and national levels in government, with one more woman elected to Parliament in the Solomon Islands and greater acceptance of and support for women candidates in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Nauru
- ✓ Drafting of the Tonga Innovation Report and Innovation Work Plan 2020-2025
- ✓ Mapping of the elevation of the entire country of Tuvalu through the use of airborne LIDAR.
- ✓ Successful Vanuatu elections, the first to be held after the declaration of a global pandemic
- ✓ Promoted the 2019 Human Development Report in collaboration with the School of Government, Development and International Affairs (SGDIA) at the University of the South Pacific in March, which encouraged discussions on sustainable development

## Aspiring to Resilience: In Their Words



*“I am very lucky to be able to take some money home just by helping to plant trees and it is not only that, I know what I have planted will benefit my children and those that come after them,”* commented a beneficiary of UNDP’s support in Fiji.

UNDP facilitated better nursery management in Fiji, which supplements the government’s ‘30 Million Trees in 15 years Initiative’.

*“We are grateful for including people living with disabilities. Most of the time they are not in our conversations, but I am glad that this assistance recognises the most vulnerable in our schools,”* shared Mr. Sinton Soalablai, Minister for Education of Palau.

*“There is a big change in men and women’s roles in our community, including in decision-making: in the past, island leaders made final decisions without getting women’s views. Now, they more widely take into account women’s and other views in island development plans,”* shared Emoulima from Nanumaga, Tuvalu.

Tsunami Preparedness Kits for schools were distributed in FSM, Kiribati, Palau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu through the “Strengthening School Preparedness for Tsunamis in the Asia Pacific Region” Phase II Project, funded by the Japan Partnership Fund and implemented by UNDP. Fifteen (15) sets of tsunami preparedness kits were handed over to Palau, the first country to receive the kits, in December.



Palau receives Tsunami Preparedness Kits under the Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience Project. (Photo: UNDP)

*“The intervention will directly benefit 75 youths, boys and girls through the training and the cash for work program, and indirectly benefit 1,500 people in the community. We need to work more with youth and women to draw on their expertise and experiences,”* commented Mafua’i-Vai’utukakau Maka, Director of the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) Tonga.

Maka was referring to the Disaster Resilience for Pacific Small Islands Developing States (RESPAC) Project. The RESPAC project, a collaboration between the Tonga National Youth Congress (TNYC), UNDP, and the NEMO Tonga, provides training for youth and women in disaster risk management and evacuation center management.

The Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project and the Tuvalu Ridge to Reef Project contributed greatly to such changes. Aimed at increasing resilience to climate change by enhancing coastal protection on the islands of Funafuti, Nanumaga and Nanumea, the Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (TCAP) has a strong focus on inclusion, with a gender-informed design, strategy and action plan.

*“This is the first step into a great future,”* he explained. *“Once our village is fully electrified, we will be able to refrigerate our daily fish catch. An electric water pump will provide drinking water to villagers. At the school, teachers and students will be able to use the copy machine and printer. Thanks to sewing machines, women producers will be able to increase their handicrafts production,”* affirmed Reuben Natamatewia, Paramount Village Chief.

The energy access pilot project on Lelepa Island, Vanuatu was implemented by the Ministry of Climate Change and Natural Disaster with support from UNDP and funding from the Government of Germany. The project set up an innovative swarm grid to provide clean, affordable and reliable electricity to the island’s 120 households.



Nanumea Atoll, Tuvalu. The TCAP involves the construction of hard and soft coastal protection infrastructure at three locations including Nanumea to reduce inundation as well as reduce coastal erosion.



Reuben Natamatewia, Paramount Village Chief (Photo: UNDP)



The Wintua-Lorlow micro-grid on Malekula, Vanuatu. A micro-grid is an independent energy system that operate outside of the national grid. (Photo: Ian Iercet)

# Spotlight on Innovation



In the Pacific context, innovation does not imply the need to discard tradition or culture, and, in fact, many innovations are inspired by traditional practices that have been ignored by the past few generations.

Innovation, as promoted by UNDP for the Pacific, is simply a new or revisited method or practice, supported by technology, best practices, and expert knowledge, to provide an efficient solution to development. The UNDP Accelerator Lab plays a large role in the promotion of innovation, but it is also evident throughout our projects. The following are some examples of how UNDP is working creatively and encouraging its partners and stakeholders to do the same.

- ***Sensemaking***

One of our biggest innovations in 2020 was sensemaking. UNDP Pacific Office led and participated in three sensemaking sessions to unpack the rationale behind its activities, as well as their intended results. This type of analysis was particularly important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; high levels of uncertainty made decision-making and planning for the future much more difficult at a time when rapid decision-making and adaptability was more crucial than ever.

UNDP has invested in sensemaking as a process rather than occasional workshops. It is an important mechanism for self-assessment and realignment, strongly rooted in a wide variety of data and situations. It supports UNDP's placement as an integrator and, using the SDG's as a guide, will better enable UNDP to deliver truly transformative solutions combined with ethnography, solutions mapping and exploration.

- ***Private Sector Innovation Hub and Co-Working Space***

UNDP set up this Innovation Hub at the University of the South Pacific's campuses in the Republic of Marshall Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The Hub and Co-Working Space enables engagement, events, and capacity building. The Hubs provide students with the space to be creative and work collaboratively.

- ***Plastic-Free Initiative***

UNDP completed an Innovation Facility-funded behavioral insights trial project to tackle waste management in Honiara, Solomon Islands, with the aim of making schools plastic-free.



REACH Bus ensuring accessing to government services in remote Fiji. (Photo: UNDP)

- **Scaled-up REACH Program Mobile Service Delivery**

The Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians model, proven in Fiji, was used to reach 1,777 people in Tonga. 6,084 services were delivered to the 1,777 Samoan participants in rural communities. Ensuring access to government services in the remote areas of PICs requires a willingness to be pioneering and incentive.

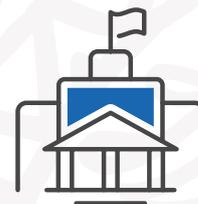
- **New Financial Products to Boost Inclusion**

The Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP) worked with private sector partners to test and scale various initiatives, including Mobile Village Agents from Vodafone in Fiji and the *youSave* micro-pension product with Solomon Islands National Provident Fund, Our Telekom and Bmobile providers. It is clear that the widespread usage of mobile phones in PICs can be leveraged to widen access to services and improve livelihoods.

- **Creative Project Design**

For the second phase of the Governance for Resilience (Gov4Res) project, a series of ‘design-sprints’ were run with five (5) PICs and regional and donor partners. The projects were redesigned based on the findings, creating strong engagement and ownership of the project by governments, donor commitments, and new partnerships with civil society organisations and across teams within UNDP.

# Effective Governance



Reflections from  
**Revai Makanje Aalbaek**  
Team Leader



## *What was the biggest challenge your team had in adapting the programme due to the pandemic?*

Many of our governance projects are regional, covering between 10-14 countries. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to re-programme, and we relied on ICT to ensure the continuity of projects and the business continuity of the governance institutions we work with in the region. The pandemic also pushed the team to anticipate the governance challenges of the future and start the shift away from traditional governance programming to a more risk-informed, future-focused approach that fully utilizes digital solutions.

## *What was the highlight of the year for you?*

I am gratified that UNDP's work contributed to some very positive results, including the successful elections in Vanuatu and the adaptation of parliamentary procedures to pandemic conditions throughout the region. The legislatures modified their processes very quickly with UNDP support, ensuring stability and continuity of services to Pacific people. Despite the stress and uncertainty of the pandemic, and the severe tropical storms, UNDP kept promoting and progressing the 2030 Agenda, which is very important. Our ambition to make progress towards the SDGs helped us to keep things in perspective- we remembered that the global pandemic is not a permanent situation, and, in adapting to it, we have opportunities to embed and promote more inclusive sustainable development that empowers women and marginalized groups.

The Effective Governance Thematic Group contributes to the following outcome:

*By 2022, people and communities in the Pacific will contribute to and benefit from inclusive, informed and transparent decision-making processes, accountable and responsive institutions, and improved access to justice.*



## SDG: 5,10,16

Governments that are accountable, with impartial institutions and well-considered plans that meet citizen demands, are best able to provide services and maintain stable conditions ideal for growth and prosperity. A country that respects the highest standards of governance also respects its citizens and its environment. The UNDP Pacific Office partners with PICTs to co-create good governance through broader participation of citizens, the promotion of gender equality, and the encouragement of efficiency and transparency through anti-corruption activities.

Throughout 2020, UNDP worked with donors and country partners to promote and facilitate effective governance through activities in the following areas: 1) access to justice, 2) access to services, 2) elections and inclusion 3) parliamentary capacity building and business continuity, and 4) anti-corruption programmes. UNDP and its partners adapted and made timely, evidence-based adjustments and decisions to ensure that the governance programme was implemented despite the compounding crises of the pandemic and the impacts of climate change and disasters.



Newly elected Members of the Vanuatu Parliament at a five-day induction programme (Photo: UNDP)

The UNDP Pacific Office, by adapting to challenging circumstances while aspiring to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, contributed to several major governance achievements:



**First COVID-Era Elections:** Vanuatu was the first country in the world to hold elections, with UNDP support, after the pandemic was announced. UNDP support included a review of election procedures and procurement of PPE and sanitizers for voters and electoral officials.



**Four Women MPs in Solomon Islands:** Solomon Islands also held elections with UNDP support. A milestone was reached with the election of four female MPs, which is the highest ever number in its law-making body. UNDP's efforts to build capacity through the Women Candidates Electoral Clinics and the Women of Excellence Leadership Initiative contributed to this achievement.



**Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Fiji Report:** As the technical lead for the socio-economic response, UNDP worked on the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment in Fiji report, which sets out the framework for the UN's socio-economic support to countries and societies in the face of COVID-19.



**First Virtual Session of a Pacific Parliament:** The FSM Congress was the first Pacific legislature to convene a virtual session in March. At this sitting, the FSM Congress approved a multimillion-dollar COVID-19 finance package.



**Support for Business Continuity:** UNDP supported the review of parliamentary procedures in 14 PICs to adapt to COVID-19, enabling Parliaments to continue their functions.



**Adoption of the Teieniwa Vision: Pacific Unity Against Corruption:** One major positive impact of South-South cooperation was the adoption of the Teieniwa Vision: Pacific Unity Against Corruption during a regional anti-corruption conference in Kiribati in February 2020.

## ACCESS TO JUSTICE

In enabling access to justice for more people in the Pacific, UNDP is growing effective governance, upholding human rights, and supporting peace and stability. Those conditions help to make individuals and communities more resilient, as they are aware of their rights and the safeguards that are in place to protect those freedoms. People and communities with improved access to justice are better able to recover from setbacks as they are more knowledgeable about the law and its protections.

UNDP's country-specific and regional programmes are designed to strengthen governance systems for equitable service delivery, including access to justice. Support to legal institutions, projects that ensure the human rights of prisoners, and ensuring more Pacific people benefit from legal aid services are all areas of focus. During 2020, the work of the UNDP Pacific Office contributed to safeguarding the rights of incarcerated people, assisting victims of gender-based violence and people affected by mental health issues, and preventing communicable and mosquito-borne diseases.

UNDP also worked diligently in this area with its partners to deliver information and services on COVID-19 to the most vulnerable during 2020. It was very fortunate that UNDP's partners in Access to Justice activities, including Australia and the EU, allowed resource reallocation to meet the pressing needs of Pacific communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. This funded REACH missions, the procurement of ICT equipment, and the provision of connectivity.



## Fiji

The Fiji Access to Justice Project, funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Fiji Judicial Department, achieved a major milestone in 2020. Using ICT tools, the project was able to ensure that the **'United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners'**, also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules, were adhered to by the Fiji Corrections Service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prisoners' rights were protected at the same time that the health and safety of guards, prisoners, and the visiting public were preserved.

With COVID-19, prisons went into lockdown, creating a situation in which inmates would not be able to meet their lawyers and family members face-to-face. UNDP worked with the Fiji Corrections Services to set up a system to enable inmates to have videoconferences with their lawyers and family members. UNDP provided laptops, wifi devices and data packages. As at Oct 2020, an average of 90 inmates each day accessed the videoconferencing facilities. Following the success of this UNDP-supported trial, Fiji decided to scale up the initiative. UNDP also provided water tanks to the Fiji Corrections Service to improve sanitation for inmates, especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **SUCCESS STORY:**

In April, the new videoconferencing facilities were installed at the Suva Women's Corrections Centre. "Kelera" (not her real name), serving a life sentence, has been separated from her son, who now lives in Hawaii, for 17 years. When she was able to videoconference with him, they had a very happy and emotional virtual reunion. While ICT was introduced to enable the regular visitations that had been going on prior to COVID, it turned out to have a much greater impact, making dramatic family reunions such as Kelera's possible.



## Solomon Islands

UNDP contributed to many more women and men in Solomon Islands being made aware of the services available to them through the Public Solicitor's Office (PSO). UNDP supported the deployment of paralegals and community legal advocates to the provinces, reaching out to 568 women and 615 men.

Sessions to raise awareness of the rights of people with disabilities was also conducted with 50 stakeholders (33 women and 17 men) from the justice sector, NGOs, CSOs and Government. This interaction resulted in an agreement to strengthen cooperation, the Hibiscus Commitment Statement on Disability Sector Collaboration.

## Access to Services

UNDP also facilitated access to government and civil society services, which was a crucial intervention during 2020. This area of work included COVID-19 response, actions to reduce gender-based violence, support for counselling and mental health providers, and assistance to prevent and treat other significant public health concerns, including AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. In aspiring to increase resilience levels throughout the region in 2020, UNDP sought to promote improved mental and physical health through training and awareness-raising, as well as through the distribution of medicine and equipment.

## COVID-19 TESTING, EQUIPMENT, AND INFORMATION

Drawing upon its expertise in coordination and experience with innovative service delivery, UNDP took a lead role in providing rapid assistance to PICTs in terms of COVID-19 testing and the provision of medical equipment.

UNDP supported the expanded use of GeneXpert Instruments for molecular testing, which saw over 59,672 COVID-19 tests done. UNDP supported preparedness, prevention and control through the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), medical equipment, PCR lab reagents, hospital waste management assistance, and case management advice in 11 PICs. In Solomon Islands and Fiji, UNDP ensured that COVID-19 information was distributed in a disability-friendly manner, consistent with its aim to improve access to information. UNDP also worked with UNOCHA and other UN Agencies to design and formulate the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) to COVID-19.

The Pacific Office supported the revival of the dormant Early Recovery Network Cluster in its operations. “Early Recovery” refers to the fact that during a crisis, it is important to save lives, but it is also necessary to lay the foundations for recovery at the earliest and plan long-term development to reduce suffering and vulnerability.



### Nauru

UNDP provided the National Emergency Services (NES) in Nauru with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) consisting of gloves, sanitizers, and masks to strengthen preparedness. In 2020, Nauru, like all PICTs, was extremely vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic due to high levels of pre-existing conditions in the population.

## ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

UNDP-supported activities also improved awareness of gender-based violence (GBV) and access to legal services for its victims. GBV is a longstanding issue in the region, and its prevalence increased with the COVID-19 pandemic. In Fiji, the Fiji Access to Justice Project, supported by UNDP and the EU, facilitated access to legal services for the victims of GBV. Ending GBV will continue to be a priority for the UNDP Pacific Office and is addressed in all projects and programmes through the Signature Solution on Gender.

In 2020, the European Union and the UN embarked on a new, global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) - The Spotlight Initiative Regional Pacific Programme.

The Spotlight Initiative brings focused attention to the issue of violence against women and girls, moving it into the spotlight and placing it at the centre of efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the Pacific, the Spotlight Initiative has one Pacific Regional Programme and four Country Programmes (Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu). The focus of the Spotlight Initiative is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Domestic Violence (DV).

## Tonga

In Tonga, UNDP and the Tonga Family Protection Legal Aid Centre (FPLAC) collaborated to develop an online portal that allows GBV survivors to access legal information and report abuse.

## INTEGRATED SOCIAL SERVICES

In Fiji, 5,237 people received integrated social services (legal counselling, social welfare, medical services, psychosocial) through the COVID-19 REACH Platform of the Fiji Access to Justice Project. The UNDP Pacific Office supported two NGOs namely Medical Services Pacific (MSP) and Empower Pacific, to raise awareness with 2,475 women and 2,712 men on sexual and gender-based violence, child abuse and justice mechanisms for redress. Medical Services Pacific provided 7,867 services (5,155 to women, 2,712 to men), which included psychological counselling and legal aid services.

### EMPOWER PACIFIC

According to Empower Pacific CEO Patrick Morgan, after the COVID-19 lockdown in Lautoka, Fiji, *“We have received calls about loss or reduction of jobs and income, becoming unable to afford basic food, housing rent and life-saving medication, breakdown of relationships between couples, children and parents, including violence and neglect. The issues people talked to us about are often complex, driving them even to suicide attempts in the most serious of cases.”*

To help Empower Pacific to continue to provide its vital counselling services, UNDP provided mobile smartphones and tablet computers with broadband internet connectivity. Those connected devices enabled staff to work remotely during the lockdown period. Counselling services, through phone calls, video calls and text messages, also became more accessible to people living in remote communities, whether outer islands or the interior of Fiji, and to persons with disabilities. Empower Pacific provided services to 571 beneficiaries, including 314 women and 257 men.



Empower Pacific helpline responds to calls from all over Fiji 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This helpline counselling service aims to respond to people's stress and anxieties under the nationwide response to COVID-19 undertaken by the Government. (Photo: UNDP)

## GLOBAL FUND PROJECTS

The Global Fund is dedicated to ending AIDS, Malaria, and TB as epidemics. A formidable partnership involving government, civil society, the private sector, and the people affected by the diseases, it invests almost US\$4 billion per year, working in more than 100 countries around the world. UNDP is proudly entrusted to deliver Global Fund projects in the Pacific.

The Global Fund's Multi-Country Western Pacific Integrated HIV/Tuberculosis (TB) Programme was a three-year (2018-2020) US\$11.4 million programme to improve control of HIV and TB in 11 PICs, namely Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Implemented by UNDP, the programme involved the Ministries of Health and civil society stakeholders, with technical assistance from the World Health Organization.

Through that programme, 1,494 men who have sex with men, 1,962 transgender women, 1,376 female sex workers, 249 seafarers and 87 prisoners were reached with HIV prevention programmes in 2020.

For people living with HIV, across the 11 PICs, a total of 69 people were reported by the national programme to be living with HIV in country, of which 63 (91%) of these were reported to be accessing treatment. While these figures were slightly below targets, the results were positive. UNDP and its partners will continue to support PICs to address these public health challenges. TB treatment and prevention, as well as anti-malarial efforts, were also a significant focus of the project.

### SUCCESS STORY:

Vanuatu aims to eradicate malaria in-country by 2023. The *Ensure 81% Coverage of Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs) in Vanuatu* programme was a three-year (2018-2020) Global Fund initiative, implemented by UNDP in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to achieve that national goal.

The project distributed critically-important bednets; it intended for each household to have at least one LLIN, and directed that children under 5 years old and all pregnant women must sleep under LLINs. The distribution of the bednets was an ongoing process, as they require replacement after three years and are easily destroyed by storms. UNDP distributed extra emergency bednets following Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Harold in April 2020. More than 200,000 LLINs in total were given to households from 2018-2020.

"It helps a lot," according to Esther, a young mother who lives in Malekula, referring to the LLIN distribution campaigns. Esther's son, now a toddler, contracted malaria the first week after he was born. Asked how she will prevent him contracting malaria again, she responded: "We sleep under a mosquito net, I never let him sleep outside. I will keep it this way until we go and get new nets."



A young boy rests under a long-lasting insecticidal net in the Solway area of Sanma province, Vanuatu. (Photo: UNDP)



The REACH Bus delivers government services to remote communities of Fiji under the REACH Project (Photo: UNDP)

## RIGHTS, EMPOWERMENT AND COHESION (REACH) MOBILE SERVICE DELIVERY PLATFORM

The REACH Platform is a mechanism through which public services are brought into communities, particularly those with high numbers of vulnerable people, such as squatter settlements. REACH aims to create stronger and better-informed communities through the provision of equitable access to justice, access to quality health care, access to information, and social protection. The REACH mobile team, which uses buses, tents, and tables to travel to communities in both rural and urban areas, distributed information and supplies that helped communities manage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Fiji

To deliver information and practical assistance to people residing in urban informal settlements in Fiji, who were highly vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic, REACH collaborated with UN Habitat, government, and CSO partners to provide 16,542 COVID-19 response integrated services. More than 5,126 people in Fiji (48.2% women, 33.7% men and 18.1% children) benefitted from services including the delivery of soap, sanitizers, and educational materials. People residing in rural areas received 16,317 services, while 3,179 were delivered to poor urban communities.

### Tonga

The REACH platform also recorded successes in Tonga. UNDP and UN Women, working in partnership, carried out a comprehensive joint TC Harold/COVID-19 response using the REACH mechanism to the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) sector group in Tonga.

A collaboration between the Markets for Change Project and REACH resulted in REACH programming being offered at Markets for Change events, thereby improving market vendors' access to essential services. Plans were made to continue REACH in Tonga into 2021.



Women line up to cast their vote at the general elections in Vanuatu amidst the pandemic in May.

## ELECTIONS AND INCLUSION

There are enormous structural challenges and biases that hinder the achievement of gender equality through women's political participation in the Pacific Region. Significant progress was made in 2020 to increase women's participation on governance and political processes, but this will be a long process. The UNDP Pacific Office worked diligently through the challenges of the year to promote the inclusion of women and marginalized groups in the electoral process and in government decision-making. Women were highly encouraged to vote and to participate in elections, both as candidates and as members of electoral management bodies. Youth and marginalized groups were also urged to take an active role and contribute ideas to their governments. Inclusion is one of the core principles of UNDP's programmes and is a development priority of many PICs; the more diverse groups of people have their say in government, the more likely it will be that government will adequately respond to their needs.

## INCLUSION OF YOUTH AND MARGINALIZED PEOPLE

In Vanuatu, UNDP found that partnerships with the media greatly increased the participation of marginalized people and communities. Messages broadcast on various radio and TV stations were able to reach all the islands of Vanuatu. Working with two mobile phone companies, Digicel and TVL/Vodafone, UNDP ensured that push SMS messages could reach voters in both urban and rural areas. Growing demand for good governance starts with young people, so youth were a target audience of interventions around the region. The convening of Youth Parliament Sessions was an exciting opportunity for 98 youth from around the Pacific, with young people from Tonga (21 females, 11 males), Solomon Islands (5 females, 7 males), and Vanuatu (26 females, 26 males) having benefitted. Youth Parliaments saw discussions on a diverse range of issues, including the COVID-19 pandemic, corruption, and inclusive government. When complemented by civic education campaigns and leadership training, Youth Parliaments will contribute, over time, to governments that are more diverse in terms of age.

## INCLUSION OF WOMEN



### Nauru and Vanuatu

In Nauru and Vanuatu, a gender mainstreaming strategy was applied to UNDP's electoral support. Gender equality language was mainstreamed in all of Vanuatu's Electoral Commission's regulations, procedures, operational manuals, and public outreach materials, including posters, songs, and videos. The electoral authorities' visual images were re-branded to feature two characters (one woman and one man) and posters on 'equal rights' and 'gender equality' were produced.



### Solomon Islands

UNDP launched a Regional Women MP Mentorship Project in 2020 to continue to strengthen women's leadership at the national level. In Solomon Islands, the Australian government's flexible funding approach enabled UNDP to continue to invest in post-election activities for increasing women's participation in politics.

UNDP applied a Gender and Social Inclusion lens to all governance activities in collaboration with country partners' Ministries for Women, thereby ensuring that women are included in all aspects of governance. For example, in Solomon Islands, the Ministry of Women provided advice to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) to ensure that the Model Farm Assessment template was gender-inclusive.



### Federated States of Micronesia

In FSM, UNDP trained 61 participants (57% women) from key national and state government agencies and civil society organizations on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Disasters and Climate Change.

## ELECTIONS

Elections are one of the pillars of democratic government and are opportunities for people's voices to be heard. UNDP is committed to creating environments where more voices are respected and to cultivating opportunities to amplify the voices of those who have long been under-represented in government.

Over the years, UNDP and its partners have learned that Temporary Special Measures to increase the participation of women and marginalized groups can be perceived negatively. Efforts to promote the participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups, are therefore included as one aspect of larger activities designed to increase the participation of the entire populace. "Good governance" requires broad participation, public demand for accountability and transparency, and confidence on the part of the populace that they understand how government works and are sure that their voices are heard.

UNDP provided assistance to Nauru, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu and that support contributed to the following results:

 **Nauru**

**Voter Composition:** Women comprise 51 percent of registered voters, which is a very positive indicator that UNDP support to the Electoral Commission is making an impact.

**Electoral Commission:** All three members are female (100%)

**Voter Outreach:** The UNDP Nauru Electoral Support Project included activities, community discussion guides, and voter education.

 **Solomon Islands**

**Candidates:** Four women out of a total of 14 candidates in two by-elections for Central Honiara and North East Guadalcanal constituencies. The four women were trained by UNDP at Women Candidates' Clinics.

**Elected MPs:** One woman won, thereby increasing women's representation in parliament to 4 out of 50 MPs, the highest ever in Solomon Islands' history. UNDP was instrumental in this achievement by building capacities through the clinics and the Women of Excellence Leadership Initiative.

 **Vanuatu**

**Voter composition:** 278,954 registered voters comprised of Women: 49.16 percent, Men: 50.84 percent

**Voter Outreach:** Messaging targeted women voters and women's image featured on voter awareness materials. National voter awareness campaign reached 115,000 people with UNDP support.

**Polling Staff:** Port Vila constituency had a high percentage of female polling staff at 54.05 percent while male staff was 45.95 percent.

**Candidates:** Out of 295 candidates in the national elections, 19 (6.44%) were women.

**Women Elected MPs:** None. This was the third national election in a row in which no woman was elected.

**Women in Local Government:** Due to Temporary Special Measures set in 2013, supplementary women outside the quota are being elected. Luganville Council had six women amongst its 13 members.



A young family in Vanuatu cast their votes at the general elections during the pandemic in March 2020.

### **SUCCESS STORY: First Elections after the COVID-19 Pandemic Was Declared**

The Vanuatu Electoral Commission and Electoral Office received UNDP support to deliver a safe, secure, and credible election in very challenging circumstances. Measures were taken to ensure public safety during the pandemic and to overcome the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Harold.

The New Zealand Government fortunately made an additional investment into the Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project to meet the increased demand and complexity of the voter and national ID registration system. The project was also given flexibility in the use of its resources due to the pandemic and natural disasters, which enabled quick adaptability in programming.

UNDP and the Vanuatu authorities ensured the implementation of safety precautions during polling and for the counting and tabulation of results. Voters were kept safe and were confident enough to turn out in numbers. The livestreamed opening of the translucent ballot boxes with unique seal numbers and indelible ink on television and on Facebook also contributed to public trust in the electoral process.

## **PARLIAMENTARY CAPACITY BUILDING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY**

By working to build the capacity of legislatures, UNDP contributes to law-making which is more transparent, inclusive, and effective at building the resilience of member countries. Projects in this area increase the accountability of institutions and decision-making processes. During 2020, UNDP also provided support for the business continuity of parliaments around the region, ensuring that the institutions remained open, functioned well, and were accountable.

UNDP and its partners have long supported legislative capacity building in the region and had planned to implement three projects in 2020, namely the Fiji Parliament Support Project, the Strengthening Legislatures in the Pacific (SLIP) Project and the Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative (PPEI) Project. Their implementation was unfortunately heavily impacted by COVID-19; development partners fortunately did agree, however, to agree to one-year no-cost extensions for FPSP and SLIP.

UNDP successfully negotiated with development partners and the 14 parliaments in the region to reprogramme funds to ensure business continuity and build capacity as much as possible. The pandemic necessitated the smarter and more frequent usage of ICT tools so that parliaments could continue to function.

UNDP's Technical Advisory Note 'COVID-19 and Corruption in the Pacific', which reviewed parliamentary procedures such as oversight functions and made recommendations for COVID-19-adapted anti-corruption policies and procedures, received very positive feedback from Members of Parliament, Secretariat staff and CSOs.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

UNDP's network of technical resources provided expertise in areas such as procedural matters, ICT, civic education and public outreach, the conduct of Public Accounts Committees, the budget cycle, and public financial management. All of this technical advice, normally shared in person, was provided remotely during 2020. The lessons learned from that adjustment will be used to enhance outputs moving forward. UNDP also called upon its network of other UN agencies, including UN Women and the UN Office of Human Rights, international parliamentary organizations, to provide technical support and guidance.

Border closures and the inability to travel, negatively impacted the extent of UNDP's support to parliaments to assess their institutional attainment against the 2018 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) benchmarks for the effective functioning of democratic legislatures. The intended assessment will be adapted and carried out in 2021.

South-South collaboration, aligned to UNDP's global efforts to promote such cooperation as an accelerator and multiplier of sustainable development, was utilized in the innovative Final Budget Outcome (FBO) platform which allowed Fiji and Tonga to benefit (remotely) from the expertise of Pacific researchers during their budget process.

While there is hope that face-to-face interventions may be possible in 2021, UNDP is well-placed to continue to offer virtual assistance for capacity building.

### Palau

UNDP supported the Office of the Public Auditor in Palau to review and strengthen the financial systems and processes of five pilot state governments. This activity aimed to strengthen the state governments' role in SDG implementation and localization in an inclusive, participatory, representative and accountable manner.

## PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Development partners agreed to finance the purchase of ICT equipment for the parliaments. This, coupled with the provision of technical advice, enabled 14 parliaments in the Pacific region to continue to sit and committees to hold meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Federated States of Micronesia

The Federated States of Micronesia held the first virtual session of any Pacific parliament. The FSM Congress went on to conduct all of its 2020 sessions remotely based on the change of its rules of procedure and the ICT solution deployed with UNDP.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

Partnerships with a wide range of actors have been key to promoting a ‘whole-of-society’ approach to preventing and fighting corruption in the Pacific. The year 2020 saw the adoption of a major regional anti-corruption statement, the development and implementation of several anti-corruption strategies, and additional COVID-responsive programming. The activities undertaken were all aligned to the UNDP Pacific Office’s intention to increase the transparency and accountability of governance institutions and formal and informal decision-making processes.

### **THE TEIENIWA VISION: Pacific Unity Against Corruption**

This bold statement on corruption was adopted during the Pacific Regional Conference on Anti-Corruption convened in Kiribati in February 2020. The UNPRAC Project played a crucial role in the organization and conduct of the meeting and UNDP’s cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) was key to its success. The meeting was attended by the President and Vice President of Kiribati, the Prime Ministers of Samoa and the Cook Islands, Ministers from the Kingdom of Tonga and Solomon Islands, the Ambassador of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the High Commissioners of Australia and New Zealand, and the Fiji Islands Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) Deputy Commissioner. Another major linked outcome is the fact that Tonga acceded to the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) immediately after the conference.



Pacific Island Forum Leaders at the launch of the Teieniwa Vision in Tarawa, Kiribati in February 2020.

### **Strategies and Technical Advice**

UNDP’s technical advisory note ‘COVID-19 and Corruption in the Pacific’ was provided to 14 PICTs to help guide their COVID-19 anti-corruption policies.



## Cook Islands and Federated States of Micronesia

The Cook Islands and FSM received technical assistance on the drafting of new anti-corruption strategies. FSM benefitted from technical and policy support and knowledge sharing on the establishment of Right to Information (RTI) regimes. The FSM Freedom of Information Act was also drafted with support from UNDP.



## Fiji

The Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption was advised on its first large-scale public sector integrity campaign, which supported its strategy linking anti-corruption work with improved service delivery. An Anti-Corruption toolkit for women-owned micro, small and medium businesses in Fiji was developed and rolled out with UNDP guidance.



## Solomon Islands

UNDP technical experts collaborated with Solomon Islands to revise its anti-corruption strategy. The newly established Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against Corruption (SIICAC) enhanced its anti-corruption programming capacities.



## Tuvalu

UNDP continued to advocate for the finalization and adoption of anti-corruption strategies in Tuvalu. UNDP is committed to embedding anti-corruption measures in its member countries.



## Vanuatu

Vanuatu was assisted with anti-corruption strategies and the implementation of the RTI law. UNDP will continue to be available to guide anti-corruption strategies through the provision of technical advice.

## UNITED NATIONS PACIFIC REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION PROJECT (UNPRAC)

The UN-PRAC project commenced in 2012, and the eight years that were invested in anti-corruption programming have laid a strong foundation in the region. The four year Phase II UNPRAC project, worth US\$6.1 million from 2017-2020, was an Australian Government-funded activity to support PICs with the implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption and to develop anti-corruption systems. It was managed jointly by UNDP and UNODC.

Flexible funding from DFAT under UNPRAC Phase II enabled a needs-based response and the prompt adjustment of activities to COVID-19 circumstances in the first half of 2020. Some of the 2020 activities of the UNPRAC team included addressing procurement risks in the health sector; promoting business integrity and ethics; raising awareness of the human rights implications of corruption during the pandemic; advocacy for the introduction of the Right to Information and whistleblower regimes in the Pacific, and anti-money laundering technical assistance to PICs.

The scope of UNPRAC's mission was widened in the second half of 2020 due to the additional funds that were received from New Zealand. This funding was complemented by significant support of the Government of Australia. UNDP has found that integrated programmes such as this one, funded by multiple donors, tend to be more effective and sustainable.

# Spotlight on the UNDP Accelerator Lab for the Pacific



## THE ACCELERATOR LAB NETWORK

The global network of Accelerator Labs, or AccLabs, was established with funding from the State of Qatar and the Federal Republic of Germany. Sixty (60) labs, serving 78 countries, were set up in July 2019 with a total funding of \$70 million, making 2020 their first full year of operation.

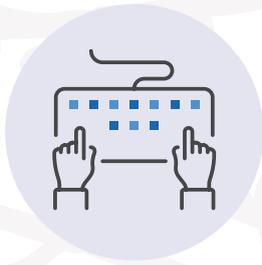
The Accelerator Labs address the international need for a source of reliable data on development indicators that is not influenced by any one interest. The Accelerator Labs also assist countries and development partners to interpret that data and use it to create and implement development plans and projects.

This is a brand new idea; more sophisticated than knowledge hubs, the AccLabs are centres of innovation, which gather information, hypothesize, and run experiments and pilot projects to create new knowledge. Through the Accelerator Labs, UNDP's creativity in sourcing local solutions to tackle complexity is now stronger and available to our member countries and the broader UN Development System.

## ACCLAB PACIFIC

The Accelerator Lab for the Pacific is staffed with four development professionals based in Suva, Fiji. Its establishment is a practical response to the paucity of reliable data and indicators in the Pacific Islands and the need for creative solutions to assist the region. As UNDP aspires to help create a more resilient Pacific region, innovation driven by the AccLab is a crucial input. For example, when faced with the intimidating reality of the climate emergency, we must boldly experiment and innovate to safeguard the future of the Pacific region.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE ACCLAB



Collects and stores data



Identifies gaps and areas where development assistance is needed



Highlights and analyzes issues found in reports



Maps issues along system levels and time horizons



Facilitates workshops



Supports inter-agency taskforces



Temporarily focuses on the impacts of COVID-19 in Fiji



Practices Collective Intelligence Design - this refers to diversifying the sources of intelligence by valuing grassroots and unusual sources

## INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES

AccLab carried out a virtual ethnography exercise during the lockdown period. Hydroponics activities were also undertaken in a variety of informal settlements around Fiji, to varying degrees of success. In addition, the AccLab tested the possibility of establishing a school farm on the island of Beqa, Fiji. Looking ahead, the AccLab will bring together various agencies and existing projects to test other innovative ideas for food security, amongst other priorities. The Lab has also contributed extensively on data mapping inhouse, and solutions mapping in the climate resiliency and food security space.

## DOLLAR VALUE IN MAKING SENSE

There was a massive amount of data generated by the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) for COVID-19 in Fiji. Stakeholders needed support to digest that data and apply it to their work. The Accelerator Lab Pacific developed lenses through which the data could be viewed and analysed, and took bold steps to ensure that the data would be useable for a diverse range of development partners. The Accelerator Lab first identified thematic issues from the SEIA reports and then mapped those issues in various categories. The Lab proposed lenses through which those issues could be dissected, including through time horizons (i.e. before problem, problem point, crisis stage, and after problem), thereby creating a systems map of the COVID problem space in Fiji. The Lab crucially pinpointed areas where development assistance would be helpful.

The Lab also carried out community research using virtual ethnography remotely with grassroots communities in the 10 countries covered by the Pacific Office to explore how the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting them on-the-ground. This further helped to supplement and as well complement our understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic space in the Pacific.

## RAPID IMPACTS

In September, the AccLab ran a workshop for 34 people from 13 UN agencies in Fiji. Participants conducted systems mapping for potential entry points and formulated opportunities for joint programming. Following this success, the AccLab is now supporting an inter-agency taskforce in applying the same approach to the Rapid Policy Appraisals for COVID-19 in 10 Pacific countries, and is exploring the possibility of offering data interpretation and systems mapping services to governments and partners.

## PROGRESSING PARTNERSHIPS

The Accelerator Lab for the Pacific worked with the Pacific Community's Pacific Data Hub to analyse UNDP project datasets to improve the integration of this information in SPC's regional knowledge resources. This type of information-sharing exercise will, in the future, enable more Pacific people to access accurate information in a variety of areas. It will also assist Pacific governments to develop evidence-based policies and programmes.



Vusama villagers and the Nadroga Rugby Union help prepare the 'matoji' from where the saltwater will be extracted for crafting salt. (Photo: UNDP Pacific)

## REVIVAL OF TRADITIONAL SALT-MAKING IN FIJI

The salt-making project in Vusama Village on the Southwest Coast of Fiji's mainland of Viti Levu, is an excellent type of work that distinguishes the AccLab.

**Hypothesis:** Resilient communities use traditional indigenous knowledge as a foundation for decision making. If communities revive their age-old traditional practices, this will strengthen cultural identity and improve climate resilience as they will be more aware of biodiversity and value their natural resources.

**Experiment:** Vusama village, located on the South West coast of Fiji's main island Viti Levu, had, in the past, produced sea salt. However, no one in the village had done this for over 50 years. The AccLab and UNDP's Ridge to Reef project set up a demonstration site to revive the traditional practice of salt-making.

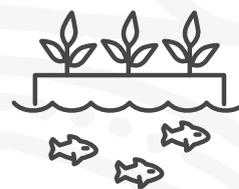
**Results:** Villagers young and old took great pride in learning the traditional practice that was associated with their village, and appreciated the natural environment that made it possible. They valued the potential for improved livelihoods as well. Salt-making proved to be very useful during the pandemic as community members were encouraged to stay at home, which made crabbing, already a challenge due to climate change, even more difficult. Salt-making is a disaster-resilient practice that strains natural resources to a lesser extent than other economic activities. Salt-making proved to be an inclusive activity, a source of cultural pride, a sustainable livelihood, and a motivation to preserve the natural environment.

This was a very successful AccLab project, and a clear demonstration of the value it adds to UNDP's country and regional programmes. The AccLab will continue to support the region to build resilience and map its own way out of the pandemic.



The women of Vusama Village reviving the traditional practice of salt-making (Photo: UNDP)

# Inclusive Growth



Insights from  
**Patrick Tuimaleali'ifano**  
Deputy Team Leader



## *What was the biggest challenge your team had in adapting the programme due to the pandemic?*

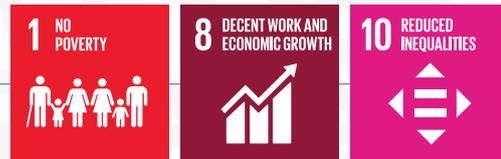
The travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19 meant that the project teams could not deliver agri-inputs and conduct training in a timely manner.... Another challenge was having to pivot the projects to support the immediate needs of vulnerable communities with regards to the negative economic impacts of COVID-19. The fact that, even with drastically different delivery modes, our projects effectively assisted women and marginalized groups speak to the success of our gender mainstreaming efforts. Despite being amongst the most vulnerable, women are very important in ensuring that the benefits of the relief and recovery assistance are shared across the community.

## *What was the highlight of the year for you?*

It was our ability to adapt to pandemic restrictions and refocus our projects to support women market vendors and farmers in communities affected by TC Harold and Yasa. We distributed agri-inputs, held capacity building training on organic agriculture productivity and business management, and facilitated access to financial and social protection services including savings, micro-credit, micro-insurance and pension funds to help build resilience. Many of the adaptations we made during 2020 are permanent or, at least, long-term. UNDP began thinking about the recovery process as soon as the pandemic was declared; being prepared and proactive is one way that we offer significant value to member countries. I look forward to better times in 2021 and to providing effective support to inclusive economic recovery and growth in all of our Pacific member countries and territories.

The Inclusive Growth Thematic Group contributes to the following outcome:

*By 2022, people in the Pacific, in particular youth, women and vulnerable groups, benefit from inclusive and sustainable economic development that creates decent jobs, reduces multidimensional poverty and inequalities, and promotes economic empowerment.*



### SDG: 1,8,10

UNDP’s work to assist the most vulnerable has taken on renewed energy in the Pacific, as the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities. While border closures and promptly-declared states of emergency shielded most of the Pacific from high rates of COVID infections, nothing has been able to shield Pacific countries from the economic disaster and indebtedness resulting from the elimination of tourism, the decrease in many exports, and the wider global economic downturn. High levels of unemployment and underemployment caused socioeconomic stresses, straining government services and causing increased violence against women and children.

While the Pacific is not unique in its suffering, PICTs lack the resilience of larger countries that have less debt, more land-based resources, and more sophisticated public services and safety nets. UNDP and its partners are challenged to assist member countries to effectively manage the impacts of both the pandemic and natural disasters while planning and starting to implement paths to recovery.

During 2020, the UNDP Pacific Office worked to support poverty reduction, SDG-aligned planning and budgeting, financial inclusion, and green/blue economies.



Highly Dependent on Tourism: Fiji, Palau, Vanuatu



Highly Dependent on Timber Exports: Solomon Islands



Highly Dependent on Remittances: Tonga



Highly Dependent on Fisheries, Licensing, External Aid: Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Tuvalu

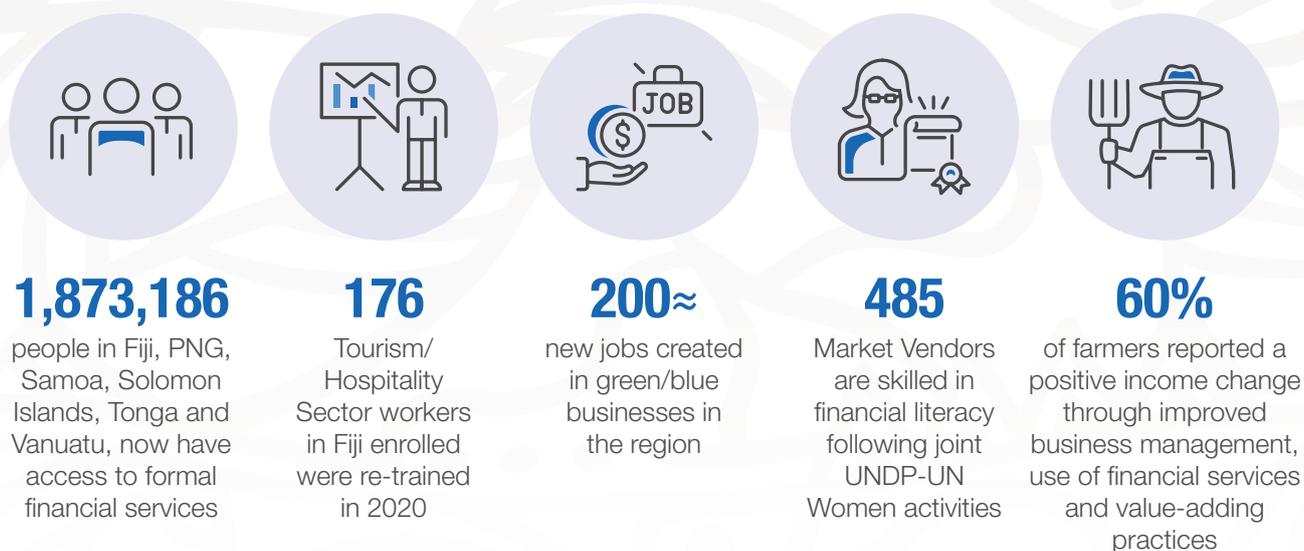


Highly Vulnerable to Climate Change Impacts and External Shocks: All

Technical advice, funding support, knowledge-sharing and access to networks are some of the ways that UNDP supports its member countries to implement strategies that promote financial inclusion and develop economic policies that will encourage and assist vulnerable people.

Activities designed to improve planning and budgeting processes, kick-start the development of green/blue economies, bolster financial inclusion, and reduce multidimensional poverty contributed to some progress in this thematic area. UNDP's assistance, delivered in collaboration with government and the private sector, also strengthened business policies and initiatives to increase the competitiveness of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

## ACHIEVING MORE INCLUSIVE GROWTH



## POVERTY REDUCTION

The aim of the Pacific Office was that, by the end of 2020, six PICTs would have seen a decrease in poverty according to national definitions. This was not on track to be achieved even before COVID-19. Despite a lack of robust data for 2020, it is clear that no PICTs recorded a decrease in poverty during the year.

### *Facilitating International Remittances to Alleviate Poverty*

In response to a forecast reduction in international remittances due to the pandemic, a portion of the International Money Transfer (IMT)-hub grant was repurposed to allow for a two-month (June-July) waiver of fees for both domestic and international remittances in Fiji. Data collected from Vodafone revealed that, while pre-COVID-19 remittances through the M-PAiSA platform averaged 11,000 transactions valued at FJ\$2 million, by the end of the initiative, remittances through M-PAiSA hit around 25,000 transactions and achieved a value of around FJ\$8 million. The volume and value of transactions continued to increase when transaction costs were reintroduced, boosting the overall usage of the M-PAiSA platform. This was a simple but very effective immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic that contributed to building resilience.

To emerge from the devastation of 2020 will take many years; the economies of member countries are in a dire state. UNDP's support to governments in terms of humanitarian assistance, policy guidance, and economic development planning is a crucial input for the region. UNDP's assistance to communities can have an exponential impact, as people encourage their peers, share their newfound knowledge, and create new jobs and opportunities for others. UNDP prioritizes projects for communities where results can multiply and will continue with this approach moving forward.

Despite the crises of 2020, some projects met the targets that had been set in the pre-COVID era, which is a remarkable accomplishment.

## PLANNING AND BUDGETING

UNDP supports national and local institutions to improve their planning and budgeting processes, including by monitoring progress on the SDGs, managing risks and mainstreaming gender. By promoting public allocations for gender equality, UNDP advocates for the empowerment and inclusion of women and marginalized groups.

UNDP is committed to assisting its partners with planning and budgeting processes that are aligned to the SDGs and include careful consideration of the needs of all, including marginalized individuals and communities. Notably, with UNDP support, the Government of RMI finalized its National Sustainable Development Plan in the second quarter of 2020.

## GREEN/BLUE ECONOMIES

The concept of green/blue economies is promoted by UNDP as an inclusive and environmentally-friendly approach to spreading prosperity. Green/blue economic policies provide an enabling environment for private sector initiatives that create jobs for women, men and youth, deriving economic benefits from the sea and the land through sustainable management. The bountiful resources of the Pacific Ocean must be accessed carefully, and the limited land areas of PICTs must be wisely utilized and, where possible, rehabilitated or improved. Organic farming, fisheries, ecotourism and farm-to-table business models are all Blue/Green Economy initiatives that UNDP has supported in the region. As many PICTs have high levels of urbanization and youth unemployment, projects that address those factors have been a good place to start, providing visibility to the Green/Blue Economy concept and securing rapid buy-in.

### *Support for Organic Agriculture*

#### **Tuvalu**

UNDP supported Tuvalu to enhance its Agriculture, Tourism, Fisheries and the Private Sectors through the Trade Project aligning the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) policies with the National Strategic Goals. UNDP developed two Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Tuvalu Non-Government Organisation (TANGO) and Tuvalu National Council of Women (TNCW) with over 100 active registered members. That MOU will continue implementation of project with the private sectors through the Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation and maintain the export of Tuvalu's local products (virgin oil, toddy syrups, and salted fish), primarily to Tuvaluans living in New Zealand, Australia and Fiji.



## Solomon Islands

UNDP also supported the formulation of the National Organic Policy for Solomon Islands.

POETCom, or the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community, is the governance body of organics industry, with a secretariat based at SPC. With UNDP guidance, the POETCom Strategic Plan was revised to be more gender inclusive. This new Strategic Plan will guide the formulation of national organic policies in other Pacific countries, including Fiji and Vanuatu, and will make training in organic farming more gender-inclusive.

### *Pacific Crowdfunding Challenge*

The Pacific Crowdfunding Challenge, a pilot initiative by StartSomeGood and UNDP Pacific Office, tested the hypothesis that it might be possible to crowdfund for social impact in the Pacific. Supported by the Markets for Change project and the UNDP-USP Innovation Hub, the Pacific Crowdfunding Challenge ran workshops on crowdfunding in Solomon Islands and Fiji. Following an open call for applications from the online crowdfunding bootcamp, social enterprises from Fiji, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands were selected. The fundraising campaigns were launched in March 2020, enabling the public to support initiatives such as the Mahun Bungalows.



Mahun Bungalows is a locally owned hospitality business in Malekula Island, Vanuatu, promoting eco-tourism concept in the country.



## Vanuatu

Mahun Bungalows is a locally owned hospitality business in Malekula Island, Vanuatu that promotes eco-tourism, bolsters the local economy through community participation, and preserves the natural environment of the South West Bay area. Owner Damien Robinson Hophand planned to use assistance from the crowdfunding campaign to employ and train young people from the surrounding communities and to replant mangroves around the bungalows.



Mahun Bungalows Vanuatu. Image source: <https://www.vanuatu.travel/au/mahun-bungalows>.

## FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Throughout 2020, UNDP worked with countries and development partners to ensure that financial inclusion policies and strategies were in place and implemented to expand access to financial services, with a focus on rural and low-income women and youth.

### *Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP)*

Since 2008, the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP) has promoted formal financial services for low-income customers, empowered customers through financial education, supported governments with policy development, and partnered with the private sector to develop accessible new options in order to increase the number of people using formal financial services. It was funded by Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, and the UN Capital Development Fund and implemented by UNDP. PFIP was concluded at the end of 2020 with some good results, despite many challenges.

Due to the pandemic, the National Financial Inclusion Taskforce Working Group on Statistics was not able to meet. PFIP did provide support to the regulatory and policy environment through the National Financial Inclusion Taskforce, collaborated closely with the Reserve Bank of Fiji, and de-risked new products by the private sector.

In a joint programming with UNCDF, PFIP delivered some other positive results in 2020. PFIP onboarded 880,397 women through its collaboration with partners from the financial sectors in Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. With support from UNDP/UNCDF, the level of financial inclusion increased from 64 percent to 85 percent (130,000 adults), of which 47 percent are women. Together with a wide variety of financial services providers, PFIP continuously advocated for the inclusion of women in its projects.

The Programme also commenced new initiatives, such as the Pacific Insurance and Climate Adaptation Programme (PICAP), which is a joint programme with UNCDF and UNU. Additional joint programmes with UNCDF were developed during the year for implementation in 2021, including the Pacific Digital Economy Programme (jointly with UNCTAD) and the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (jointly with UNCDF and UNEP). The innovation labs that PFIP created within private sector partners managed to test and scale various initiatives, most notably the Mobile Village Agents from Vodafone in Fiji and youSave micro-pension product with Solomon Islands National Provident Fund, Our Telekom and Bmobile providers.

### *Usage of Financial Services*

Participation of Women in the Economy Realized (PoWER) studies that map the access, usage and agency barriers to financial services in Solomon Islands were conducted in 2019, and results were shared with stakeholders and the wider financial inclusion community in 2020. While access to financial services has increased consistently over the past years, increasing usage still remains a challenge. UNDP will continue to work with its partners to address this.

There have been some successes. In 2020, human-centred design methods were used to enhance the service delivery of the PacFarmer app for women in Fiji. Other ways to popularize and increase the usage of financial services, such as familiarization workshops and training, will be introduced moving forward. The usage of financial services builds financial security that increases resilience. Women are a particular focus group for financial services inclusion.

## Financial Inclusion Training

UNDP also provided training in Financial Management and Business for Micro and Small Enterprises. One hundred and twelve (112) market vendors in Fiji, 132 market vendors in Solomon Islands and 81 market vendors in Vanuatu accessed the training which strengthened their economic security. They were upskilled in financial literacy, basic business management, and organic farming practices.

UNDP collaborated with UNCDF and stakeholders, including the Fiji National University, to offer free online courses for hospitality workers to develop new skillsets and seek alternative employment. One hundred and seventy-six (176) workers completed courses in 2020. With COVID-19 having closed borders and decimating the tourism industry, hospitality workers needed support to seek out alternative livelihoods.

## Markets for Change Project (M4C)

This well-known UN Women project was implemented in partnership with UNDP over six years from 2014-2020 to promote women's equality and empowerment through inclusive rural and urban marketplaces in Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. The M4C project is primarily funded by Australia and, since 2018, this was complemented by funding from Canada. As most market vendors are women, and markets are a source of food security and livelihoods, they are crucial to PICs, especially during the COVID-19 era. Vibrant Pacific markets house micro and small businesses, usually run by women, and provide fresh, healthy food that builds immunity and improves the chances that communities can bounce back rapidly from disease and climate change events.



Participants of an M4C training in Kadavu (Photo: UNDP)



Farming tools earmarked for vendors at the Vunisea Market, in Kadavu. (Photo: UNDP)

During the year, UNDP, UN Women, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), and the Suva City Council collaborated to improve conditions and future prospects for vulnerable communities in Kadavu, Fiji affected by Tropical Cyclone Harold through the provision of seeds, training, and tents. Training in financial literacy, basic business management and sustainable farming practices were available at a fair that also featured information on financial services. A total of 145 farmer vendors of Vunisea Market in Kadavu, Fiji (including 30 men and 115 women) received dried seeds and farming equipment. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) packages, which included soap and cleaning detergents, were also distributed.

For 2021, UNDP together with partners will undertake additional innovative interventions to address the root causes of poverty in the region and proactively introduce mechanisms that provide some protection, such as the promotion of savings and investments in sustainable livelihoods.

# Support to Pacific Small Island Developing States



## “RISING UP FOR SIDS”

UNDP has drilled down from its broader agenda to identify focal areas that have the greatest likelihood of influencing rapid pandemic recovery and achievement of the 2030 agenda in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Pacific SIDS have unique and significant vulnerabilities; in order to address those and support the blue/green development ambitions of SIDS, UNDP has prepared a transformational portfolio of work.



The Fiji Electricity Authority windfarm in Sigatoka. Fiji is exploring alternate means of renewable energy.

Message from  
**Kevin Petrini**  
Deputy Resident Representative a.i.



Twenty-three years ago, I arrived in Samoa to serve as a volunteer in a rural village on Savaii, Samoa. In one way or another, I have been involved with Pacific Island Countries ever since, working on environmental issues, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk management in a variety of roles.

As an engineer, a development practitioner, and friend to Pacific peoples, I have watched the escalation of climate change into a global emergency with great alarm. But I have also witnessed the positive impacts that development partners such as UNDP can make through thoughtful, inclusive and targeted interventions in partnership with countries and communities. While we cannot stop climate change, we can and will protect the most vulnerable, safeguard the land and seas as much as possible, and embrace innovation to adapt. UNDP, in solidarity with Pacific SIDS, is committed to using partnerships and leveraging its comparative advantages and positioning to safeguard Pacific lives and livelihoods.

The People's Climate Vote, conducted by UNDP in 2020, revealed that 74 percent of the public in SIDS believe that climate change is a global emergency. We need to work quickly to address it, with the same amount of urgency we directed to the COVID-19 pandemic. The experience of 2020 proves that UNDP can deliver in a fast and efficient manner; the way in which we delivered assistance to member countries was impressive and appreciated. It also demonstrated the agility, the efficiency, and the value that UNDP can offer to its member countries as we manage, and seek to mitigate, the impacts of climate change.

UNDP will assist PIC through its thematic programmes and through additional mechanisms, including the Accelerator Lab Pacific, the Climate Promise, and the Pacific SIDS Offer. UNDP's global offer for Small Island Developing States is an exciting opportunity for our member countries. It presents a portfolio of solutions to the climate crisis, offering SIDS help with digitalisation, ways to transform their economies by focusing on environmentally-friendly practices and encourage green/blue businesses, and, of course, through decisive climate actions. It is not just a concept; it is a funded portfolio through which we will hasten and widen our response to the climate change emergency.

Looking into 2021, there is much uncertainty, and it seems likely that the impacts of the pandemic will be felt for some time to come. For the Pacific, it is likely that there will be severe tropical cyclones that will require government and donor resources, already strained by the pandemic and the effects of climate change. By accessing the Pacific SIDS Offer, member countries can benefit from UNDP's wealth of experience and expertise, gaining additional support on the ground for communities and capacity building, to prepare for COP 26 and other international fora, and to plan for the challenges ahead.

## PACIFIC SIDS OFFER

*Helping SIDS Accelerate Action towards the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway*



**Digitalization:** Improves Efficiency and Access to Services, Safeguards Data, Ensures Business Continuity, and Expands Markets



**Climate Action:** Preserves Livelihoods, Improves Security, Mitigates Disaster Impacts, Promotes Adaptation and Resilience



**Green/Blue Economy:** Creates Employment, Preserves the Environment, Attracts Investment, Empowers Communities

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FINANCE: A CROSS-CUTTING ENABLING LEVER

Key donors to the targeted portfolio designed to support SIDS include the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF), Adaptation Fund (AF), Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and the Government of Australia. UNDP also works with other partners to support SIDS to access innovative financing solutions, including blue bonds, green bonds, and reef insurance schemes.



UNDP was part of the UN and Government of Fiji joint mission to the Lau Group, which included civil society organisations and the media.

## CATALYZE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Digitalization had not been a key strategic area of support prior to 2020, so the UNDP Pacific Office secured additional regional funding for digital solutions during the year. Digital solutions were integrated in many projects around the region, and UNDP began to liaise with member countries on strategy, rolling out a Rapid Digital Readiness Assessment Tool to serve as an entry point for support to governments on planning for inclusive digital transformation. That tool will be used in Pacific SIDS in 2021.

Digitalization was advanced in the following areas in 2020 that fit into the Pacific SIDS Offer:

- ***Digital Strategies - Solomon Islands***

UNDP assisted the government with the first National Digital Economy Strategy and provincial-level digital transformation for service delivery during the COVID crisis.

- ***Online Marketplaces and Consumer Protection - Fiji, Samoa, and Solomon Islands***

UNDP/UNCDF collaborated with private sector partners such as banks and mobile network operators to develop online marketplaces. The development of these online marketplaces was accelerated by the COVID-19 circumstances. They aimed to allow MSME's as well as farmers to continue to reach their customers. In Fiji, UNDP assisted the Consumer Council with a digital price monitoring and complaints management system

- ***Youth Engagement - RMI and Solomon Islands***

In Solomon Islands, UNDP focused on digital economy and youth in terms of app development. In RMI, UNDP supported an online facility with the College of Marshall Islands and engaged with Jojikum Youth Group to lead the implementation of the youth engagement in Ebon.

- ***Digital Transformation in the Tourism Sector***

This is essential to the COVID-19 recovery process. Digitalization will support the growth of the creative and cultural industries and will enable Pacific SIDS to effectively market themselves as destinations. Online training will assist people to transition into new positions or move existing businesses online.

UNDP partnered with the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) and Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association (FHTA) to expand opportunities for businesses and workers through a series of low-cost virtual micro-credential training courses. Through digital reskilling, tourism employees can maintain their livelihoods, and vulnerable populations can avoid further marginalization through unemployment.



Nauru increasing the use of feasible renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies to support socio-economic development in accord with the country's energy roadmap targets outlined in the Nauru Energy Roadmap 2018-2020. (Photo: Nauru's Energy Division of the Department of Climate Change and National Resilience)

## ACTIVATE CLIMATE ACTION

According to the 2020 People's Climate Vote, 74 percent of people living in Small Island Developing States believe that climate change is a global emergency.

While one of the thematic areas of the UNDP Pacific Office is Resilience and Sustainable Development, this pillar of the Pacific SIDS Offer is more specific to Climate Change. Moving forward, the UNDP Pacific Office will support SIDS through three entry points, namely energy transition, nature-based solutions, and adaptation and resilience.

The following is a snapshot of some activities of 2020 that were aligned to the Pacific SIDS Offer:

- ***Climate Investment Platform***

The Climate Investment Platform, which is a partnership between UNDP, IRENA, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), supports SIDS to access climate finance by streamlining multi-partner investment, directing funding to where it is most needed, and maximizing its impact. Climate investment initiatives are already underway in Vanuatu.

- ***Digital Protection of Biodiversity***

UNDP supported Palau's biosecurity systems during 2020. The Palau Biodiversity Project website was used regularly and is a key resource for partners. Tracking of the website, which includes a Digital Library and Best Practices pages, shows that the number of users is growing.



Pacific island countries working to achieve their renewable energy ambitions.

- ***Energy Transition - Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru***

Pacific SIDS are highly dependent on fossil fuels, a situation that is costly in both economic and climate terms. While countries are increasingly using renewable energy, excess demand is usually met by diesel. The diversification of energy sources will help Pacific SIDS meet their NDCs and improve their resilience.

- ***Promoting Outer Island Development through the Integrated Energy Roadmap (POIDIER) Project***

The Government of Kiribati, with the support of UNDP and GEF, is implementing the POIDIER Project to achieve Kiribati's renewable energy ambitions. Activities include training programs, strategic planning, community education, investment in PV mini-grids and battery storage.

- ***Nauru SMARTEN Project***

Nauru's Supporting Mainstreamed Achievement of Roadmap Targets on Energy in Nauru (SMARTEN) project, also implemented by UNDP with GEF funding, includes training and investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

- ***Disaster Risk Management - Fiji, Palau, Samoa***

UNDP is working to modernize data collection for risk management purposes. Training in Palau for public and civil society partners strengthened gender-sensitive disaster communications, climate-monitoring systems and community resilience. Attendees were equipped to collect qualitative and quantitative social data that would present a more accurate picture of vulnerable communities. This intervention is aligned to both the Pacific SIDS Offer and the global Sendai Framework.

With funding from GEF and the GCF, UNDP worked with local stakeholders to implement several mitigation efforts, including drainage works, river wall upgrades, and the rehabilitation of the natural spring pool (for flood protection) in Apia, Samoa.



A fisherman in Bairiki, Kiribati netting for fish to feed his family. (Photo: UNDP)

## PROPEL BLUE ECONOMIES

The Blue Economy will, in linking the preservation of the natural environment with economic opportunities, support sustainable livelihoods in the Pacific and protect its comparative advantage of abundant ocean resources. This is the newest area of work in the Pacific SIDS portfolio, one that UNDP has begun to explore in collaboration with other UN agencies and a wide range of partners. For this pillar, support will be directed to the development of blue economy strategies, resource mobilization, and the implementation of pilot projects.

At the first UN Biodiversity Summit, SIDS leaders spoke eloquently about the need to protect the oceans. They emphasized the opportunities that sustainable, regenerative Blue Economies offer to island nations. UNDP is committed to maximizing those opportunities and assisting its country partners to access and replicate them.

### ***Food Security - Kiribati***

In Kiribati, the “*Enhancing National Food Security in the Context of Global Climate Change*” project is setting up community-based monitoring systems and building capacity in sustainable fisheries.

### ***Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management II***

The PIOFM Phase 2 project supports Pacific Small Islands Developing States in meeting their obligations to implement and effectively enforce global, regional and sub-regional engagements for the conservation and management of transboundary oceanic fisheries thereby increasing sustainable benefits derived from this fisheries.



A group of Yellow Snappers hover above a reef while huge numbers of Barracuda fill the water column in Palau. (Photo credit: Richard Brooks/Lightning Strike Productions)

### ***Global Fund for Coral Reefs***

Established in 2020, the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) is a blended finance vehicle leveraging grants, debt and other financial instruments to facilitate private return-based investments for coral reef conservation and resilience. The GFCR seeks to invest \$500 million USD through through 2030. A collaboration between UNDP, UNEP and UNCDF and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, it is the first UN Multi-Partnership Trust Fund for SDG14 *'Life Below Water'*.

### ***Climate Risk Insurance - Fiji and Vanuatu***

In December 2020, UNDP rolled out the “Leaving No One Behind in the Digital Era: Pacific Insurance and Climate Adaptation Programme” in Fiji and Vanuatu. This will be expanded to other SIDS in 2021. It develops affordable climate risk insurance, targeted at the agriculture, fisheries, retail and tourism sectors with a specific focus on women, youth, migrants and MSME segments. Delivered in partnership with UNCDF and UNU-EHS, the initiative is funded by Australia and New Zealand.

The Pacific SIDS Offer, Rising Up for SIDS, is a portfolio of work that integrates UNDP’s knowledge, expertise, and resources, and concentrates its focus on the three areas of Digitalization, Climate Action, and Blue Economy that require a significant investment but will result in exponential returns in terms of sustainable development.

# Resilience and Sustainable Development



Insights from  
**Ms Winifereti Nainoca**  
Team Leader a.i.



## ***What was the biggest challenge your team had in adapting the programme to COVID?***

This thematic area expects and responds to natural disasters. It was certainly challenging to do that during a global pandemic. Disaster response and climate change adaptation are two areas that are best tackled with in-person interactions. It is not that easy to convey empathy in a Zoom meeting with connectivity issues, but we managed. We also learned that our ICT equipment and connectivity is so much better than that of our member countries. UNDP provided support in that area and the increased use of ICT for doing business is here to stay. The positive is that we save on travel costs and time, and have a reduced carbon footprint.

## ***What was the highlight of the year for you?***

I am thrilled that we have contributed so much to Tuvalu. We have mapped the elevation of the entire country using drones and have come up with a very workable, inclusive Coastal Adaptation Plan. It's exciting that women have been involved in the plan at all stages, which is quite progressive. While people in the region are living with the impacts of climate change, that experience has not always influenced changes in terms of environmental protection. I believe that COVID-19 made everyone more aware of the link between people and environment, and resulted in more attention and respect paid to traditional, environmentally friendly practices. We will build on that awareness going forward.

The Resilience and Sustainable Development Thematic Groups contributes to the following outcome: By 2022, people and ecosystems in the Pacific are more resilient to the impacts of climate change, climate variability and disasters; and environmental protection is strengthened.



## SDG: 7,13,14,15

We know the major impediments to development in the Pacific and we can make reasonable plans to adapt and overcome expected adversity. For instance, we know that severe tropical storms are expected from January to April every year, and we are aware that, with Climate Change, they are increasing in both frequency and intensity. The issue in 2020 was that no national plans or disaster reduction strategies predicted a global pandemic. There is a lesson to be learned here- we might be advised to consider a wider variety of unlikely, but possible, risks and prepare risk treatments in advance.

In 2020, while most Pacific countries closed their borders quickly, limiting the number of infections, COVID-19 has had catastrophic impacts on the highly exposed economies of Pacific member countries. International tourism completely stopped, remittances decreased, and most exports have been hit. UNDP's response was wide-ranging and decisive. Funds were moved with donor permission, programmes were implemented differently, and new activities were added to protect the most vulnerable and salvage the very good progress toward the SDGs that had been recorded pre-pandemic.

Climate Change is an anchor of this thematic area that also considers related issues such as the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions, environmental protection, disaster risk reduction and disaster management, and renewable energy. UNDP Pacific Office implements projects and activities in the areas of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience, and Environmental Protection to both 1) contribute to the impact of the UN System in the Pacific and to 2) make progress against the UNDP Strategic Plan for the Pacific (SRPD). While there is one intended outcome, a more resilience Pacific in the face of natural disaster and climate change- there are six different indicators, three for the UN system and three for UNDP, that guide our work.

## CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

A great deal of progress was recorded in this area during the year as implementation was adjusted to COVID-19 conditions. As at the end of 2020, UNDP had mobilized US\$18.6 million for climate change adaptation, which is 62 percent of the 2020 target of US\$30 million, and US\$13.2 million for climate change mitigation, or 81.9 percent of the 2020 target of US\$16 million. It is notable that for 2020, UNDP had aimed to support five PICTs to establish larger terrestrial and marine protected areas. This target was surpassed, with 10 PICTs having expanded their protected areas by the end of the year.

## TUVALU COASTAL ADAPTATION PROJECT

The nation of Tuvalu recorded major progress in terms of Climate Change adaptation and resilience in 2020, in part due to the success of the Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (TCAP). TCAP aims to increase resilience through measures which protect the coastlines of Funafuti, Nanumaga, and Nanumea and is designed to eventually result in increased resilience for 100 percent of Tuvalu's population.

This project is an outstanding example of gender mainstreaming, as the issues of gender has been integral from the design phase onwards, and results focus on the equal participation of women in society and their empowerment. TCAP's Gender Strategy and Action Plan ensures that all coastal adaptation activities include women and grow their leadership capacities. The project has engaged a wide range of partners in gender empowerment programmes, provides scholarships, and creates economic opportunities.

100 percent of Tuvalu's nine atoll systems are now mapped for elevation.



Funafuti, Tuvalu (Photo: UNDP)

Another success of 2020 is the Climate Change adaptation work that was done in Kiribati to improve food security. With the endorsement of the National Fisheries Regulation in February 2020, the Kiribati Food Security Project focused on improved community fisheries management and protection through awareness-raising, protection of coastal areas, development of by-laws, and the diversification of food security and income-generation activities, such as agricultural production, home-gardening, live-stock production, and mini-hatcheries.

The Kiribati Food Security Project notably featured ongoing co-finance initiatives. The coordination with the Office of the President on the implementation of Integrated Vulnerability Assessments was also a very significant and helpful input. UNDP-supported food security activities in Kiribati also exceeded their target of reaching 60 percent of i-Kiribati women.

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE

UNDP worked with its partners to assist PICs to develop and implement risk-informed development plans, improve disaster preparedness, and set up recovery mechanisms. The compounding crises of the year 2020 underscored the importance of disaster risk management to building the resilience of the region. UNDP is working to ensure that effective risk-informed development plans, disaster preparedness, and recovery systems are in place at the national and subnational levels by 2022.



### 1st Ranked Country

in the World for Disaster Risk is Vanuatu, mainly due to its very high exposure to natural events including severe tropical cyclones (World Risk Index 2019)



### 5 Pillars

of the UNDS response to COVID-19, upon which the Socioeconomic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 Report is based



### 5 PICTs

were affected by severe tropical cyclones in 2020 (Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tuvalu, Tonga, and Vanuatu)



### 3 Major Disasters

per year on average in the Pacific Islands Region



### 8 Countries

among the World's Top 20 for average annual disaster losses scaled by GDP



### Over 75%

of all reported disasters in the Pacific are climate related



### 61%

of Vanuatu's GDP was lost due to Tropical Cyclone Harold

## RISK-ASSESSED DEVELOPMENT PLANS

UNDP encouraged member countries to develop and formally adopt these plans and will continue to emphasize the importance of this in 2021. UNDP will also encourage its country partners to expand the types of risks for which they prepare in light of the lessons learned in 2020. Pandemics and other risks that were previously considered unlikely will need to be reassessed.

### SUCCESS STORY: Tonga

In Tonga, UNDP supported the creation of the Resilient Development and Finance Division in the Ministry of Finance and provided input to the strategies that will be used to managed the unit at a workshop for 20 staff members, 15 of whom were women.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) from the Ministry of Finance, Mrs. Balwyn Fa'otusia emphasized why such a unit and training was needed, stating *"We acknowledge that although substantial strides had been made addressing climate change and disaster risk through the efforts of sectoral and line agencies, central government support is also needed"*

## NATURAL DISASTER PREPARATION

During 2020, UNDP worked with six countries, namely FSM, Fiji, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu to devise strategies to reduce the economic costs associated with disasters. This was triple the target of support for two countries in 2020.

The Country Preparedness Packages created for Fiji and Tuvalu include a Disaster Risk Management Structure, legislation, and policies intended to strengthen the preparedness and collaboration between actors in disaster response. Thirty-five government officials, 34.3 percent of whom were women, attended UNDP- facilitated capacity-building sessions in Vanuatu.



UNDP supports Pacific countries' disaster resilience efforts under UNDP's Disaster Resilience in the Pacific SIDS (RESPAC) project, funded by the Russian Federation. Photo credit: OCHA Pacific/Aleyda Valdes.



NZ\$10 million mobilized from New Zealand for long-term disaster recovery in Vanuatu (including for Post-Disaster Needs Assessment)



First Ever Country Preparedness Package (CPP) prepared for Fiji and Tuvalu



UNDP built the capacity of 35 government officials (34.3% women) in Vanuatu and 30 officials (40% women) in Palau through Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) training



The Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience (DCR) project in FSM completed 14 well rehabilitation works benefitting 600 households with 3,667 people in Chuuk. Almost half, or 49.3 percent, of those people were women. That project has provided people with much better access to water and positively supports their health and livelihoods.

## DISASTER RECOVERY SYSTEMS AND RESPONSE

Much of the response delivered by UNDP in 2020 took the form of assistance for immediate needs. This included cash, water systems, radios, generators, meteorological equipment, and agricultural tools.

Disaster response was delivered through the Disaster Resilience for Pacific Small Island Development States (RESPAC) project, with funding of US\$700,000 from the Russian Federation. Of that total amount, US\$440,000 was designated for early recovery assistance through the Pacific Early Recovery Funds (PERF) mechanism. Through PERF, set up in 2019, UNDP Pacific Office responded to Tropical Cyclone Harold in Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and to Tropical Cyclones Sarai and Tino in Kiribati and Tuvalu. The development of Disaster Recovery Systems will be prioritized in 2021, informed by the lessons learned during 2020.



Access to fresh clean water is crucial for good health and hygiene. (Photo: UNDP)

## ASSISTANCE IN FIJI AND AROUND THE REGION



**US\$51,000** worth of equipment's and tools was provided to the government for distribution after Tropical Cyclone Harold in Fiji



**12 laptops** were given to the National Disaster Management Office in Fiji for COVID-19 emergency coordination



**314 households** in 12 villages in Lau were given cash vouchers worth \$32,000



**\$180,000** received from the Government of Australia for the Pacific Early Recovery Fund (PERF) to support TC Harold recovery. PERF supported Fiji Meteorological Services (FMS) with spare parts for damaged equipment in order to restore data collection and early warning for remote communities.

### Cash for Work

In Fiji, a total of 286 families were assisted with \$100 each while 28 families that consist of people who live with disability were assisted with \$150. According to Ms Taceguci Peni, the Vatoa Women's Group Leader, all households and the village shop had been out of necessary supplies for two weeks. The cash vouchers covered the purchase of supplies to support families until newly-planted crops were ready for harvest.



 **Kiribati:** RESPAC and the National Disaster Management Office worked on recovery and reconstruction activities following TC Tino and TC Sarai. The intervention included reconstruction of private dwellings (sleeping and eating houses) and community meeting houses, procurement of power tools, and tsunami preparedness activities.



 **Solomon Islands:** The Solomon Islands PERF was implemented in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Office for the rehabilitation of community water systems in Guadalcanal island. RESPAC and ADRA collaborated on that intervention.



 **Tonga:** The Tonga PERF, implemented in collaboration with MORDI (Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation), included agriculture and livelihood activities.



 **Tuvalu:** Procurement of emergency telecommunication equipment for the Tuvalu NDMO and related agencies for recovery coordination was the focus of activities.



 **Vanuatu:** PERF provided two Lucas Mills to support the recovery of local communities who were affected by the Ambae volcano disaster. It also supported the Vanuatu Meteorological Services with replacement of AWS equipment damaged by TC Harold. RESPAC, in partnership with the Government of Vanuatu Department of Strategic Policy Planning & Aid Coordination (DSPPAC), supported the Recovery Operations Centre (ROC). UNDP also supported the rehabilitation of 13 water systems and provided training on their maintenance; in fact, 572 households had access to clean water which was restored after TC Harold.



The Fiji tree Frog (*Platymantis vitiensis*) is an endemic species that is part of Fiji's natural heritage. (Photo: UNDP)

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The protection of the environment and natural resources is an ongoing priority for UNDP and its partners who deliver projects that improve access to sustainably managed resources and waste management systems. UNDP aims to support relevant national and subnational strategies and to deliver practical solutions, particularly for vulnerable communities.

### *Terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas*

UNDP assisted five (5) PICTs, namely FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, and Palau to increase their protected terrestrial and marine areas. As at the end of 2020, seven countries had reached the terrestrial protection target of 17 percent (set out as Aichi Target 11), including Palau and Kiribati. Tuvalu, Tonga and the Republic of the Marshall Islands are making good progress towards the target. Palau and Kiribati have exceeded the marine protected areas target of 10 percent (as per Aichi Target 11).



**10,170 men and 10,033 women** in the region were given access to sustainably managed natural resources and ecosystem services



**264 men and 294 women** in three villages in the Tuva Catchment area of Fiji were given access to seedlings



**10.99ha of mangrove forests** and 5.57 ha of coastal areas in Kosrae state, FSM were rehabilitated



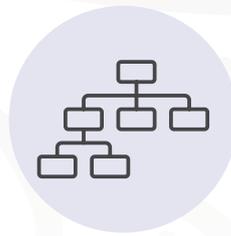
**Three (3) Island Strategic Plans** were developed with UNDP support for Abemama, Mainana and Nonoufi in Kiribati. These protect access to fisheries and aquaculture for the 4,001 men and 3,986 women.



**2,551 men and 2,491 women** who are engaged in fishing for direct consumption and sale in Nauru benefited from the Coastal and Aquaculture Act 2020, which protects access to coastal resources, in Nauru



**144,788 hectares** of seascapes and landscapes were effected managed through participatory approaches in Palau with UNDP support.



**100%** of the states in Babeldaob, the largest island in Palau, are participating in integrated land/ seascape planning, and 4 have adopted Community Action Plans.



**3,354 men and 3,262 women** benefited from the rehabilitation of mangroves and coastal areas in FSM, carried out as per the UNDP-supported Shoreline Management Plan

### Ridge to Reef (R2R) Projects

The R2R projects are some of the best-known UNDP projects in the region and have assisted thousands of women in terms of leadership development and sustainable livelihoods.

Through R2R, UNDP contributed significantly to supporting women in leadership capacity in the region. In RMI, as compared to 2019, 2020 showed a positive trend in terms of increasing female engagement in policy development, research, awareness, and advocacy under the Ridge to Reef intervention. For example, out of 254 participants, more than 100 women participated in a socio-economic survey and workshop in Likiep and Aur atolls. The survey made visible the fact that a significant number of households (42.9%) are women, and strongly recommended that investments must be made to increase earnings for women-led households.



A green turtle with an attending Batfish at Blue Corner dive site in Palau. (Photo credit: Richard Brooks/Lightning Strike Productions)

The Ridge to Reef project in FSM had a target of \$9.2 million government and donor funding, which was met by an attainment of \$10.1 million. UNDP provided a Low Value Grant for the Ridge to Reef Project in FSM to allow the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) to start work on time. Looking ahead to 2021, this project is one that will be impacted by travel restrictions. UNDP will liaise with MCT to ensure that the necessary adaptations are made so that project implementation can go ahead.

Additionally, through R2R, over half of the women in Kiribati have built capacity on improving water quality while 90 percent of Kiribati women learned about sustainable livelihood opportunities, including sandfish cultivation and aquaculture management.

A total of US\$9.8 million of resources was mobilized for the Ridge to Reef Project, with US\$9.5 million (97%) coming from vertical trust funds - the Global Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Fund (GEF). The remainder of the funding was from core resources and third-party cost-sharing.

### **Biodiversity**

UNDP supported two biosecurity projects in Fiji. The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji co-financed and assisted USP's Institute of Applied Science with FJ\$180,000 for office space at its headquarters, transportation, technical advice and salaries for 20 staff working on Green Iguana Eradication. When the BAF budget was reduced to FJ\$500,000 in total, recruitment ceased and community work was put on hold.

In Palau, the sharing of information on invasive species and clearer biosecurity protocols has already stopped the use and spread of invasive species in some locations. A Framework of Safeguards has been applied to strengthen project designs which incorporate best practices.

## **Climate Mitigation and Adaptation - Nationally Determined Contributions**

The global deadline to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) was moved to 2021 on account of COVID-19. UNDP worked with PICTs on their NDCs and National Adaptation Plans under the UNFCCC.

At the end of 2020, Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu were on track to implement their NDCs under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). UNDP supported Tonga and Vanuatu in their efforts.

UNDP and the Pacific Regional NDC Hub are working with development agencies to coordinate the activities that will contribute to the enhancement of NDCs in the five (5) Climate Promise countries of Kiribati, Palau, Nauru, Tonga, and Vanuatu, as well as in others such as FSM and Fiji.



The Climate Promise support saw UNDP build capacity in Tonga, enabling it to complete and submit its NDC.



UNDP worked closely with Vanuatu to support the implementation of the Vanuatu NDC, rolling out adaptation measures aligned to the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) and the National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy.

Funding amounting to US\$14 million was mobilized for this work. US\$8.5 million, or 60 percent, was largely comprised of third party government cost sharing with Japan, Sweden, Germany, Australia and the UN Peacebuilding fund. A total of US\$4.5 million (19%) was mobilized from GCF and GEF and US\$0.5 million came from South-South collaboration through UN India Trust funds, while US\$0.3 million was contributed from core resources.

Third party cost-sharing largely contributed to the achievement of the planned results in Tuvalu and Vanuatu. It was also observed that donor government funding priorities are well aligned with the RMI, Palau, FSM, Tuvalu and Vanuatu national development priorities on accessing clean and affordable energy, reduction in vulnerability and increased resilience.

## **Climate Change Finance**

UNDP partnered with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) resilience team to develop a research concept on Climate Change Finance Effectiveness in the Pacific. This joint concept was presented to the regional Technical Working Group for Public Financial Management and Climate Change Finance and will be jointly undertaken over the eighteen months from 2021. This partnership has resulted in the transformation of financial approach in the region from financial access to financial effectiveness, acknowledged in Agenda Item 5 of the 2020 Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM).



Renewable energy in Tuvalu.

## **Renewable Energy**

The expanded use of renewable energy in a region that is very fossil-fuel dependent is a significant priority area of work. Due to the increasing demand for electricity, diesel-based power is used to meet shortfalls. This causes the percentage share of renewable energy electricity generation in the national power generation mix to decrease, when UNDP and member countries aim to achieve the opposite outcome.

UNDP's response has been to accelerate efforts to encourage the use of renewable energy by commissioning, upscaling, and replicating demonstration activities. Success in this area is measured by the number of countries with renewable energy, energy efficiency, or energy access policies.

Most of the 2020 activities were undertaken in Vanuatu and Tuvalu, consistent with the 2020 target of supporting two countries with policy instruments for renewable energy, energy efficiency, or clean energy access. Vanuatu's strong commitment to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030, as per the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, is backed by close cooperation between Government and UNDP. UNDP assisted with the drafting of the Third National Communication, helped with the incorporation of new sectors in the draft NDC, and supported the enhancement of the National Energy Roadmaps (NERMs) in Vanuatu.

The installation of new Solar PV systems with Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), an initiative supported by the Government of Tuvalu, were planned for 2020. This would have resulted in a doubling of electricity produced by renewable sources. The installation was unfortunately delayed by the pandemic and its impacts.



**13,904 males and 13,290 females** in Vanuatu and Tuvalu are less vulnerable and more resilient due to UNDP interventions, including through support for policy instruments for energy in Vanuatu.



**15 men and 9 women** were trained in the use of the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) tool for the NDC and National Energy Roadmap (NERM).



**Five (5) Community-based Solar PV system** were installed and training delivered by UNDP and the Vanuatu Department of Energy.

The new electricity enables the operating theater of the Mauna Health Centre to serve to 8,418 men and 8,131 women in Pentecost and potentially to two other islands of Penama Province. Helenson Gao, the Nurse in Charge of Abwatuntora Health Centre imparted her appreciation stating:

*“our service delivery will improve significantly, with adequate lighting to attend to emergency cases at night and being able to communicate by mobile phones, we are able to treat asthmatic patients more efficiently”*

Three hundred ninety-seven (397) women, which is 47 percent of the targeted population, in Vanuatu benefited from the solar energy project. Improved access to clean energy means that less effort is required to prepare a meal. Mary Energy Johnwell of Wintua community, said, *“as a mother, having electricity 24 hours a day makes our lives easier. We don’t need to spend time collecting firewood to cook for meals anymore. We just use small electrical cookers”*. The time saved can be used for other sustainable livelihood or community development activities.



Students from Vusama Village, Fiji (Photo: UNDP)

## **SUCCESS STORY: Vanuatu and Renewable Energy**

Vanuatu's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement includes a goal of 100 percent renewable energy for electricity. The reliable provision of electricity is a major challenge for the country, as only four out of 83 islands are on the national grid; residents of the 79 other islands have to make-do with polluting diesel generators or solar home systems.

Vanuatu's clean energy programme includes a pioneering energy access pilot project on the small island of Lelepa, implemented by the Ministry of Climate Change and Natural Disaster with support from UNDP and funding from the Government of Germany. The project consists of setting up a swarm grid to provide clean, affordable and reliable electricity to the island's 120 households, and showcase the viability of an innovative business model which can be replicated across the archipelago.

A swarm grid is an energy solution that uses power cubes, each with a rating of 200 watts, that are interconnected with each other. The primary benefit of this system is that it optimizes energy use and prevents full system outages—a previously big issue for the people of Lelepa. A failure of one cube will immediately be compensated for by other units in the system. The swam grid will enable the community to phase out generators, and provide a more efficient solution than the current solar home systems, which were often not enough to charge a mobile phone.



Power Blox installation on Lelepa Island, Vanuatu. (Photo: Power-Blox AG/Timea Luetete)

# Gender Equality and Women Empowerment



UNDP Pacific Office is determined to advance gender equality in the region by progressing inclusion in the formal financial sector and creating economic opportunities, supporting women's civic participation and representation in government, and ensuring that women are empowered to address Climate Change and disaster risk management. As the UNDP Pacific Office strives to upgrade its Bronze Gender Equality Seal to Gold over the next 24 months, we will consider how we can also be more inclusive of diverse genders.

In all of its work, UNDP promotes equality through:

- **Advocacy** - UNDP staff ensure that, in all conversations and interactions with partners and stakeholders, impacts on and results for women are addressed.
- **Inclusive Project Design** - The needs of women and the impact of the project on women is considered right from the start of any intervention, at the project design stage.
- **Monitoring** - All projects are continuously checked to ensure that data on women is collected and that women are not negatively impacted.
- **Specific Focus on Women** - UNDP implements projects that aim to empower and include women, whether that be in politics, in the formal economy, or in disaster risk management plans.
- **Training** - Workshops for women and men raise awareness of gender issues and provide women with information, support, and encouragement to take up economic opportunities, make their voices heard by government, and take a leadership role in terms of Climate Change adaptation and mitigation.

## SNAPSHOT OF 2020 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT RESULTS

### *Financial Inclusion:*

The Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme onboarded around 880,397 women through its collaboration with its partners from the Financial Sector in Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. With support from UNDP/UNCDF, the level of financial inclusion increased from 64 percent to 85 percent (130,000 adults), of which 47 percent are women.



UNDP provides Financial Literacy Training, Business Management Training, Organic Farming Training and access to financial services to market vendors as part of their partnership with UN Women under the Markets for Change Project. (Photo: UNDP)

## **UNDP Partnership with UN Women's Markets for Change Project**

UNDP has a partnership agreement with UN Women as a main implementing partner for the UN Women's Market for Change Project. It provides Financial Literacy training, Business management training, Organic farming training and access to financial services for women market vendors and farmers in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Since the project started in 2016, 2,481 market vendors and farmers have been trained in Financial Literacy and Basic Business Management in Fiji, 905 in Solomon Islands and 1,014 in Vanuatu.

### ***Inclusion in Disaster and Climate Change Management:***

Thirty-five (35) women and twenty-six (26) men from key national and state government agencies and civil society organizations in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) gathered for a three-day workshop on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Disasters and Climate Change in October. The workshop addressed the importance of mainstreaming protection, gender and social inclusion issues into development programs that seek to build the resilience of people and communities.

### ***Ending Gender Based Violence:***

The UN and the European Union (EU) launched a multi-year partnership in October known as the Spotlight Initiative Regional Pacific Programme focused on ending violence against women and girls. This initiative focuses on filling gaps in legislation and policy, strengthening institutions, promoting attitude change, enhancing data collection, and supporting advocacy organizations.

### ***Fighting Corruption:***

In Fiji, a first-ever anti-corruption toolkit for women-owned micro, small and medium enterprises was launched to raise the awareness of women in businesses and guide them on anti-corruption. The launch was followed by a provision of series of capacity building trainings. The toolkit is being contextualized and adjusted to the policy and legal frameworks of SOI, Samoa and Palau.

An internal analytical/strategy paper on gender and anti-corruption in the Pacific was produced to inform and guide future anti-corruption gender equality and women's empowerment work.

# UN Volunteers in the Pacific



The UN Volunteers Office in Fiji, which is part of the UNDP Pacific Office, manages volunteers, representing a broad range of nationalities, qualifications, and skillsets, who are placed at UN agencies. The four categories of volunteers, namely Experts, Specialists, Youth Volunteers, and Youth University Volunteers, provide technical assistance in areas such as education, health, social inclusion, environment, youth engagement, and economic development. UN Volunteers have been present in the Pacific since 1973.

The UN Volunteers Office in Fiji is responsible for the volunteers in 14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs): Cook Is, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Is, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Is., Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu and all UN entities.

## 2020 SNAPSHOT

**72** volunteers in the Pacific

**9** countries served by UN Volunteers

**14** UN Agencies hosted volunteers

**50%** of UN Volunteer placements contributed to SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

**34** volunteers served with UNDP in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Nauru

**59%** of the volunteers were female



UN Volunteers work across the Pacific under UNDP's three focus areas - Effective Governance, Resilience and Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Growth. (Photo: UNV)

## CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Four UN Volunteers were team members on the Markets 4 Change Project, which empowers market vendors, who are mostly women, to run their market stalls like micro businesses and to operate like entrepreneurs. One National UN Volunteer Project Assistant worked in Fiji, one in Vanuatu, and one in the Solomon Islands alongside an International UN Volunteer Gender Specialist who worked in all three countries.

*“The spirit and positive energy of the UN Volunteers provide an additional dimension to our work, especially to the Markets 4 Change Project. This involves getting to know the individuals in the communities and working together over time to find the best way to achieve economic and social empowerment.”*

*Patrick Tuimalealiifano, Deputy Team Leader, UNDP Pacific Office.*



Women market vendors in Ba, Fiji were part of the Continuing Market Business Education Training under the Markets for Change Project (Photo: UNDP)

## MARKET VENDORS AND FARMERS IN THE PACIFIC

UN Volunteer Catherine Heritage implements eight modules on improving the productivity and income of market vendors. This includes carrying out market vendors and farmer profiling and needs assessment and preparing training material with implementing partners.

She has mobilized participants for various training sessions. Catherine oversees the logistics for training and evaluation, as well as related procurement activities.

Over the years, Catherine has taken on new responsibilities progressing from supporting in the background to facilitating training sessions. Speaking up in front of people, especially the older members in communities, was a major challenge. Catherine says her assignment has helped her step out of her comfort zone and develop communication, organizational and people skills.

*“From the articles I read, I knew working as a UN Volunteer would involve a lot of field work. This is very true for the Markets for Change project, which has components related to agriculture. We literally ‘get our hands dirty’ while doing market and farm surveys. It was the report writing and time spent in the office that I had to get used to. This has been a great learning experience, and I enjoy every minute of it.”*

*Catherine Heritage*

This kind of work Catherine contributes to has a significant impact on the communities. The women, men and youth who attend the training are able to use the skills and knowledge they gain to improve productivity in their farms and enhance business skills that will help in enhancing sustainability and improving their livelihood in the long run.

## SUPPORTING UN75 GLOBAL CAMPAIGN AND PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Ernest Gibson, one of seven members of the UN Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, served as a UN75 Outreach Officer with the Resident Coordinator's Office in Suva. He had just started his volunteer placement when COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. He dedicated himself to some of the communications-related work and social media campaigns run by the World Health Organization (WHO). He also took part in the WHO Representative's 'Safe Hands challenge' video. As a young person with a role on the UN Crisis Communications Team, Ernest gained invaluable communications experience and made a significant contribution to the public health response.



Ernest Gibson (far right) at the UN 75 Community Day in Nadi in December, 2020.

# Outlook for 2021



We are cautiously optimistic about 2021. With COVID-19 vaccines developed and plans for their provision in the Pacific underway, it seems likely that limited travel will resume by the end of the year. This will provide badly needed income for member countries, and, as the global economy begins to recover, remittances and exports will increase. As confidence returns, the job market will start to slowly recover, easing pressures on government services and improving the security of women and girls.

All of the country partners of the Pacific Office will benefit from additional, or reworked, interventions from UNDP to facilitate the achievement of their national development priorities. In 2021, UNDP will fully operationalize its specific suite of support for Pacific Small Island Developing States, which is based on global best-practice.

The project teams will, through 2021, explore new ways to support recovery that are aligned to the Pacific Office's thematic areas of work, and that will build on existing projects to make them risk-prepared and able to be implemented flexibly.

## REGIONAL ROLE

UNDP will continue to play a leadership role in regional development and will bring together diverse partners to achieve faster results on shared priorities.

The Pacific Office will support UNCT to develop an innovative COVID-19 Rapid Policy Appraisal covering 10 Countries, and will provide policy guidance and recommend programming entry points for the UN and its partners through the Accelerator Lab. Early in the year, UNDP will partner with the South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO) to formulate a Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework to assist with the transition to the new normal post COVID-19.

## QUALITY MATTERS

Within the Pacific Office, management improvements will be implemented to strengthen programmatic and operational oversight. To this end, projects will be more thoroughly evaluated for quality and measured against SRPD outcomes. Annual Programme Reviews will be carried out on a country by country basis.

The Pacific Office will also develop and revise Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to streamline business processes. The Pacific Office will address audit gaps and attain HACT Compliance. The corporate KPI will be improved, and the revised branding guidelines will continue to be enforced.

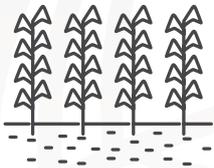
## INFRASTRUCTURE

It will also establish a UNDP office in the Federated States of Micronesia to bring its expertise physically closer to country partners in the North Pacific, making it easier to respond quickly and step up engagement with North Pacific member countries and stakeholders. The premises of the UNDP Pacific Office in Suva will also be completely refurbished to reflect new ways of working.

## SMOOTHING THE ROAD TO RECOVERY



**Tourism:** Supported the South Pacific Tourism Organization to develop a regional policy framework for Sustainable Tourism.



**Agriculture:** Built institutional capacity for better natural resource management and conservation. With financial support from the UN Secretary General's Multi-Partnership Trust Fund (MPTF), seedlings and farming tools were distributed to communities in Vanuatu (Santo and Efate in Honiara), Solomon Islands (Auki and Gizo), and Fiji (Kadavu, Labasa, Levuka and Ba).



**Financial Services:** Facilitated access to savings accounts, pension fund accounts, life insurance policies and micro loans.



**Training:** Instruction in business and financial management, organic farming, and value-adding to practices were taught in vulnerable communities.



**Women's Empowerment:** In Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, UNDP supported women market vendors in partnerships with UN WOMEN, UNCDF and the ILO to improve financial security and opportunities.



**Social Services:** In Fiji, over 5,000 people accessed services including legal advice, counselling, social welfare registration, medical services, civic education, and psychosocial support through the COVID-19 REACH Platform.

# Funding and Partnerships



## PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESS

UNDP believes that impactful development work requires a “whole of system” approach. The Pacific Office seeks opportunities to collaborate with a wide range of public sector, private sector, and international and civil society organizations to address the region’s in a sustainable, cost-effective manner with high levels of local ownership. The Pacific Office appreciates its country partners and the trust and confidence that they place in UNDP. It also acknowledges its generous funding partners, which include governments, corporations, and civil society organizations.

To strengthen coherence and improve efficiency in the UN System, the UNDP Pacific Office....

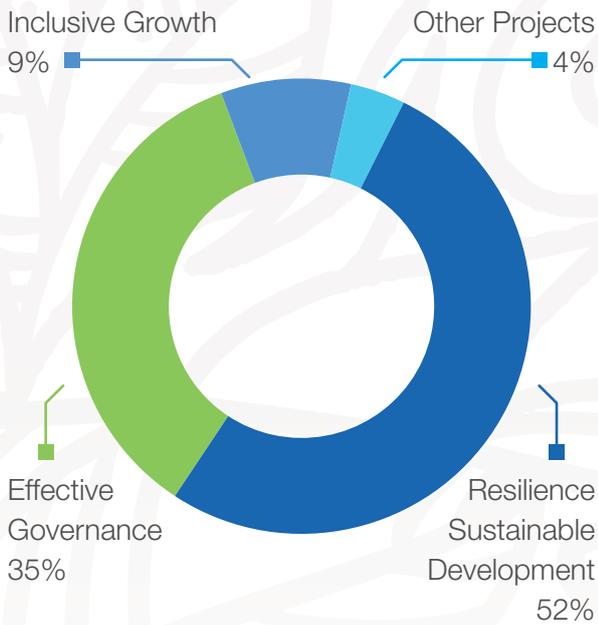
- Participated in the UNCT and the UNPS Coordination Group, working on the Common Country Analysis and Joint Country Action Plans (for 10 countries).
- Led two Outcome Groups (Resilience and Governance) and took part in all others
- Chaired Outcome Group 5 on Governance and Community Engagement which was crucial to using the SEIA to develop joint concept notes to respond to the impacts of COVID-19.
- Leads Human Resources, Procurement, and Administration common services in the UN system and contributes to Finance and ICT
- Leads the implementation of the UNCT-approved Business Operations Strategy and the Pacific in Fiji UNCT/OMT was third in the region to successfully migrate to the new platform.
- Provides operational support to RC and RCO by administering staff and managing budgets and resources.

## FUNDING FROM PARTNERS

### Top 12 Donors List:

Donor	In USD	Percent	Donor	In USD	Percent
GEF	9,731,454	21.04%	European Union	2,450,826	5.30%
Japan	7,099,829	15.35%	GCF	1,730,678	3.74%
GFATM	4,896,907	10.59%	Peacebuilding Fund	1,729,975	3.74%
Australia	4,451,083	9.63%	MDTF	1,131,640	2.45%
New Zealand	2,977,902	6.44%	KOICA	1,021,288	2.21%
Russia	2,855,090	6.17%	Others	3,545,160	7.67%
UNDP	2,622,447	5.67%	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46,244,281</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC UNITS



## EXPENDITURE BY COUNTRIES

Units	USD	Percent
Fiji	7,321,090	16%
Kiribati	1,096,693	2%
Marshall Islands	1,908,310	4%
Micronesia	3,340,873	7%
Nauru	631,474	1%
Palau	3,201,847	7%
Regional	17,721,176	38%
Solomon Islands	5,490,052	12%
Tonga	51,893	0%
Tuvalu	2,510,002	5%
Vanuatu	2,970,871	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46,244,281</b>	<b>100%</b>



(L-R) UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Resident Representative, Levan Bouadze; Commissioner of Fiji Police Force Brigadier General Sitiveni Qiliho; and New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E. Jonathan Curr during the signing in June 2020. (Photo: New Zealand High Commission to Fiji)

Insights from  
**Ms. Nasantuya Chuluun**  
Operations and Implementation  
Support Advisor



I oversee the Operations section of the UNDP Pacific Office, which includes Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, ICT and Administration, and has many layers of complexity, given that we operate in 10 countries, support sub-regional activities which are also implemented in other Pacific countries and territories. The challenges of 2020 added to that complexity and demanded efficient and swift response coupled with high-degree of flexibility while bearing in mind compliance, meticulous oversight and adherence to UNDP policies and procedures.

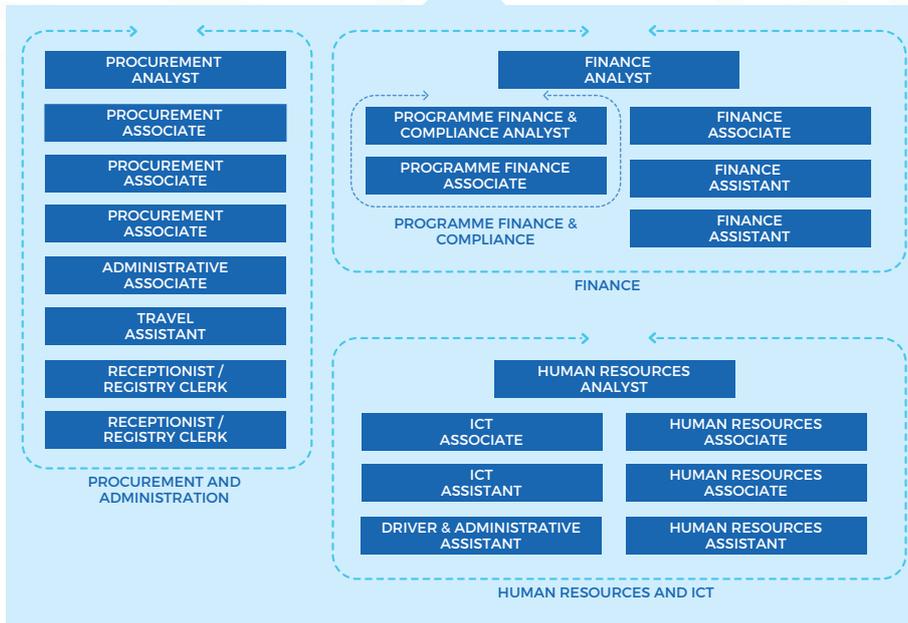
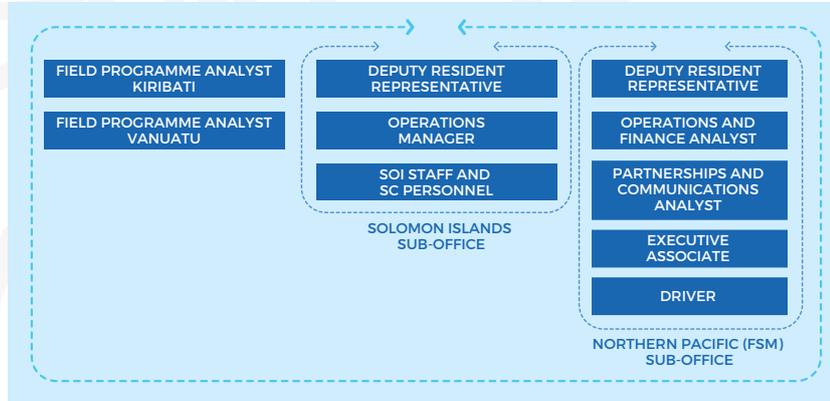
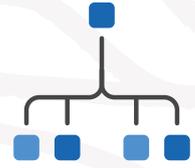
The organization had to be agile and able to adapt to the new way of working, thinking and operating within the new realms of reality in order to deliver on our commitments and outputs. Some activities in AWP's had to be revised, postponed, or implemented differently through online meetings, consultation and webinars which replaced in-person discussions and consultations. Even our Country Office audit was conducted by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations remotely. While we always strive for greater efficiency and more environmentally-friendly, technologically-based interaction; this adaptation was hastened by the pandemic and further augmented by natural disasters of the year. We did very well, working as a team to figure out how best to operate in a remote environment while also modeling agility to internal and external stakeholders.

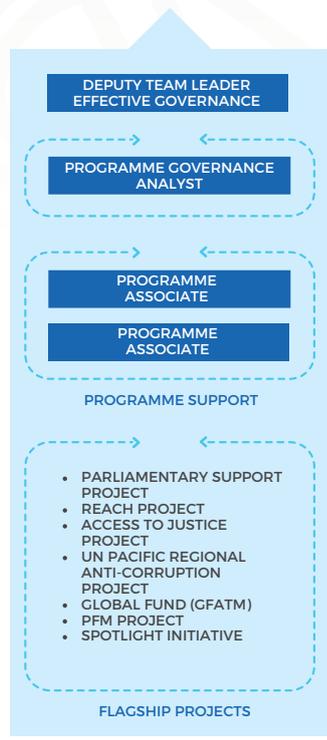
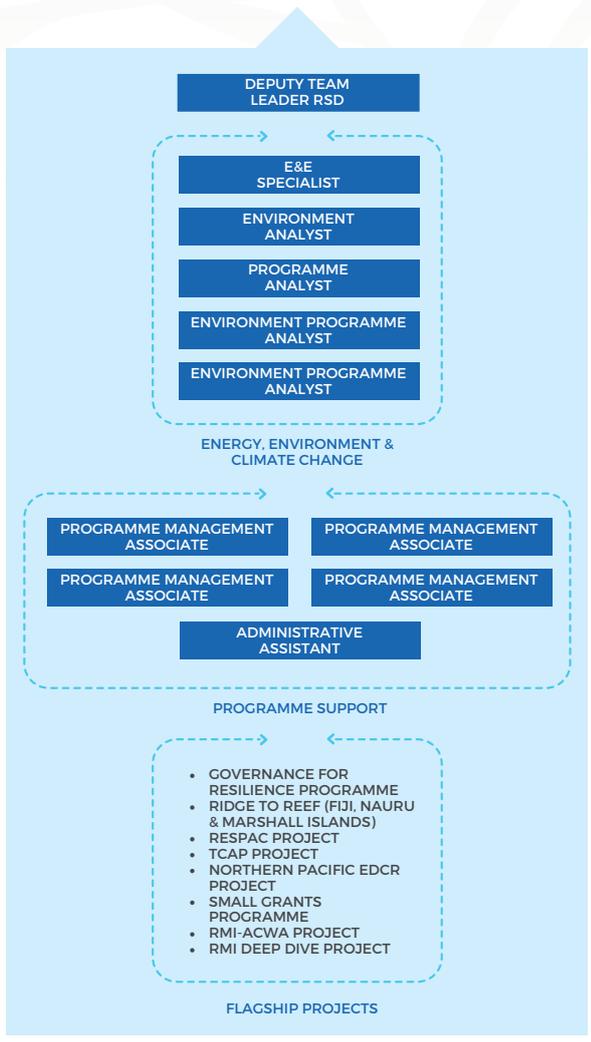
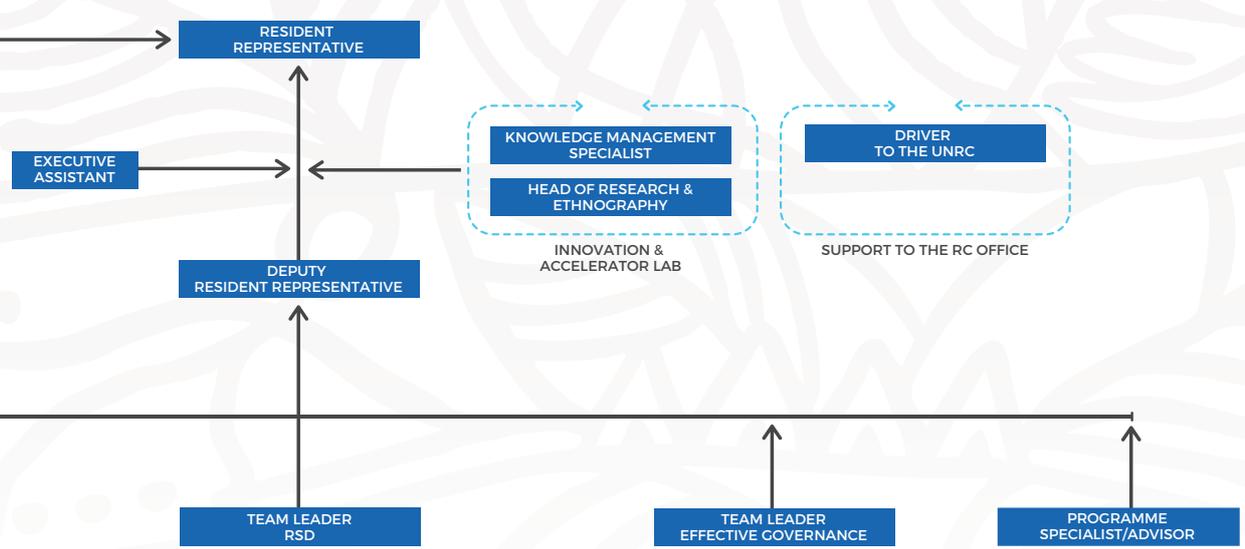
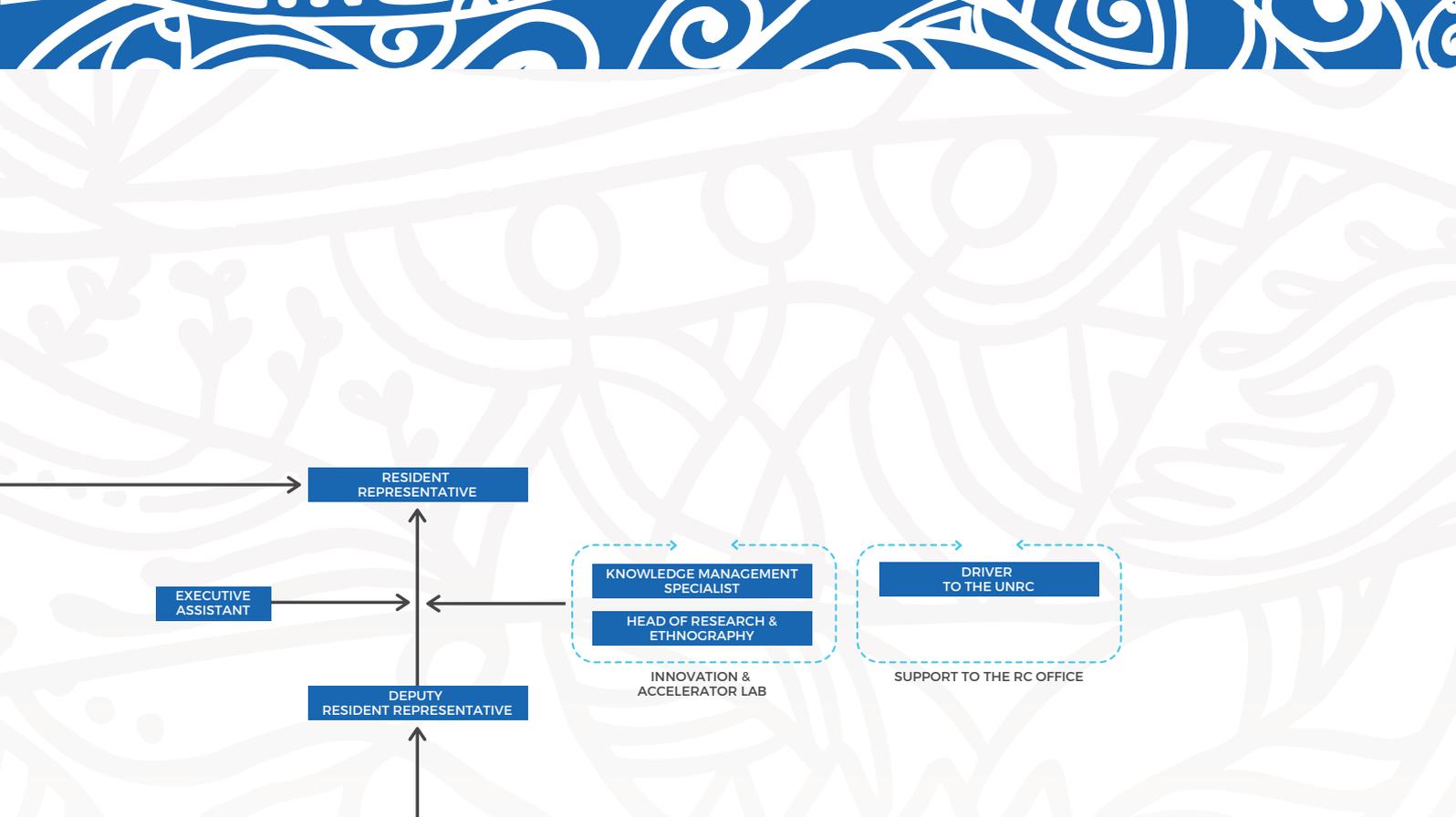
The Operations section role as service provider and effective enabler to the UNDP Pacific Office and other UN agencies is to be acknowledged during the most difficult year of our lifetimes. No one expected the global pandemic to unfold in the way that it did, but we managed, and we will continue to do so until the pandemic is declared over and the world sets about recovering. Our staff, both national and international, many of them are not from the Pacific, are to be applauded for the commitment, dedication and hard work.



UNDP Operations Team at the Staff Retreat.

# Organogram UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji











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