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## Pacific Prepares for Global Crisis

Women and children form the two major groups that stand to be hurt the most in the global economic and financial crisis. The Pacific, which is benefitting from a lag time in the transmission of global impacts to the region must act quickly to protect these vulnerable groups.

To enable Pacific Island countries to better prepare options to curb the threats from the global economic and financial crisis, the United Nations with the Government of Vanuatu and with support from the Asian Development Bank, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the University of the South Pacific will hold a high level regional conference in February, 2010 in Port Vila.

United Nations Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative of UNDP Fiji Multi-Country Office, Knut Ostby said that alongside climate change, Pacific leaders and development partners recognized that the current global economic crisis presented one of the most serious challenges to the achievement of national and Millennium Development Goals.

"Unless the crisis is responded to effectively, Pacific Island countries on track to meet their development goals could fall behind, while those that are struggling to advance could be left even worse", said Mr. Ostby.

"Children and women in many Pacific Island countries are likely to be the most severely affected, and those already vulnerable will face the greatest impacts."

The Pacific conference, "Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis" will be centered around three key areas: addressing the current crisis and protecting the vulnerable; building resilience for the future; and green growth, social

safety nets and other policy responses. It will be attended by more than 200 people from across the Pacific, including government representatives, development partners, civil society organizations, youth groups and United Nations agencies.

Announcing the conference at the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting in Rarotonga, Hon Sela Molisa Vanuatu's Minister for Finance and Economic Management, said the conference would consider how the current crisis affected Pacific people economically and socially and at community, national and regional levels.



*Women and children - the vulnerable in the face of the crisis: Eretia Iotaake from Abaiang in Kiribati prepares to wash dishes*

"The conference will bring challenges faced by similar developing countries to our attention and inform us on how we might frame a wide range of policy choices in labour, education, health, social protection and legislature," said Hon. Molisa.

In addition to the conference, a report, "Protecting Pacific Island Children and Women During Economic and Food Crisis," prepared by Will Parks, UNICEF Pacific's Chief of Policy, Advocacy, Planning and Evaluation and David Abbott, UNDP Pacific Centre's Pacific Regional Macro Economic and Poverty Reduction Advisor provides responses that could be implemented by Pacific governments to address the impact of the global economic and financial crisis.

The report points out that while short term measures to mitigate the effects of the current crisis are important such shocks are likely to become increasingly common. As such, Pacific governments should make even stronger investment in protecting women and children by implementing a range of social protection measures.

# Gender Dimension in HIV Work

A report on HIV and Gender in the Pacific, produced in partnership by the UNDP Pacific Centre, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and UNIFEM, will be launched as part of World AIDS Day celebrations in Suva on November 30.

World AIDS day is celebrated on December 1.

The report, Gender and HIV in the Pacific Islands Region, is a literature review from around the Pacific region and provides evidence and recommendations for policy action to address gender gaps in HIV programming.

The report has gained traction even in its unpublished form. It was discussed at the 9th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) held in Bali, Indonesia in August this year.

Hon. Francesca Semoso, Deputy Speaker of the Bougainville House

of Representatives discussed some findings of the report during her contribution at a satellite meeting organised by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD).

"In a recent study carried out by the UNDP Pacific Centre, UNIFEM and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, gender still does not get adequate

*"Gender still does not get adequate attention in HIV programming despite the fact that it has long been recognised as fundamental to understanding HIV and AIDS."*

Hon. Francesca Semoso

attention in HIV programming despite the fact that it has long been recognised as being fundamental to understanding and addressing HIV and AIDS," said Hon Semoso, referring to the report even before it was published.

"It is well established and internationally accepted that Gender based violence constitutes an urgent public health problem worldwide, particularly in the context of STI transmis-

sion and the HIV and AIDS epidemic. A common cause of violence by men against their wives and girlfriend appears to be refusal or reluctance to have sexual relations."

"It also seems to be widely believed in different Pacific cultures that a married woman does not have the right to refuse intercourse with her husband and partner. When girls and women are beaten for refusing sex or are forced to have sex, their risk of becoming infected with HIV increases significantly.

Women who have been beaten by their husband or partner are less likely to report rape even if the rapist is not their husband or partner and more likely to fear HIV testing even if they have not engaged in pre-marital, extramarital or paid sex," Hon. Semoso said.

The report can be accessed from: <http://www.undppc.org.fj/pages.cfm/publications/mdg-achievement-poverty-reduction-reports/>

# Microinsurance Creates a Buzz

Microinsurance – insurance that is targeted at low income earners - generated a lot of interest at the Pacific Microfinance Week held in Nadi in July.

Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP), one of the sponsors of the Pacific Microfinance Week organized a one day workshop on microinsurance.

Amongst those attending were representatives of insurance companies operating in Fiji, credit providers and civil society organizations.

Participants learnt that poor households can slide further into poverty at the advent of unforeseen events like a drought or death of a family member.

Dr Iddo Dror, Director of Operation of the Microinsurance Academy explained that people willing to insure their belongings needed to have a relationship of trust with the insurer and they had to make the right choice in choosing an appropriate insurance product that meets their needs.

"Trust, choice and value for money are the three main elements of microinsurance," he said.

A simple game called TreasurePot, developed by the Microinsurance Academy was played in selected communities

in Nadi to demonstrate how microinsurance works.

The response from these villages was overwhelming with requests of when they could have access to microinsurance services.

The Treasure Pot game in these villages was filmed and the resulting documentary will be released soon.

PFIP had also organized a one day workshop on financial literacy which shared success stories, challenges and projects underway from across the Pacific region.

Meanwhile, the PFIP team will have a learning event on microfinance in Port Moresby in November. As part of this event, the report "Building a Mobile Money Distribution Network in Papua New Guinea" will be launched.



*Explaining microinsurance: Dr Iddo Dror, Director of Operations from the Microinsurance Academy presenting at the workshop*

# Higher Status of Women Equals Lower Vulnerability

Improving the status of Pacific women equates to reducing their vulnerabilities. The better the status enjoyed by women in society, the higher the chances they have of surviving natural disasters and climate change related risks.

This was the message from Winnie Byanyima, the Director of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender Team when she visited Fiji in October.

Citing a study conducted by the London School of Economics that examined disasters in 141 countries, Ms Byanyima said that in communities where women enjoy fewer rights than men, for every man that was killed in a natural disaster, four women perished, but in societies where men and women enjoyed equal rights disasters killed the same number of men and women.

"So it really is a statement about the status of women in society; their higher vulnerability is related to their lower status in society. Improving the status of women in society generally will make them less vulnerable to climate risks," said Ms Byanyima.

Ms Byanyima also said it was important to look at women not only as victims.

"The Pacific region, which has one of the highest incidences of natural disasters, should plan its disaster risk reduction strategies taking into account the knowledge, skills and experience women have as resource managers."

Women's vulnerability to disasters and climate risks is one of the three major challenges existing in the

Pacific in the area of gender, that Ms Byanyima identified.

The other two include the low numbers of women in decision making and violence against women.

Ms Byanyima said that temporary special measures were an effective means of getting more women in parliaments.

"In many regions where the numbers have increased substantially it had been through the use of special measures to bring women in to politics, either through quotas, political party quotas, or special reserved seats that are provided through law, through the Constitution," she said.

She said the two main ways of addressing violence against women



*Gender matters: Winnie Byanyima and Pacific Centre Manager Garry Wiseman*

was through economic empowerment of women and working with boys and men to change their attitudes.

"When women are empowered economically they are able to negotiate safe relations with their male partners and to walk away from

*"The better the status enjoyed by women in society, the higher the chances they have of surviving natural disasters and climate change related risks"*

*Winnie Byanyima*

violent relationships," she said.

UNDP Pacific Centre is engaged as a partner in a regional Asia Pacific project working with men and boys to address violence against women.

While in Fiji, Ms Byanyima met with UNDP staff, representatives of civil society organizations, academia and development partners.

Ms Byanyima said she was impressed with a programme at the Pacific Centre that focused on developing inclusive financial services for the region. She was referring to the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme.

"This is a very important programme which can empower women and can have results even on violence against women."

"If women have got an environment where they can save their money confidentially, and safely and accumulate resources that they can then invest in activities that raise incomes or activities that empower the girl child for example, these have enormous benefits."

"It is already known that when women spend, they tend to spend more on their families' welfare and the benefits then trickle to the rest of the society. So this programme can have many impacts beyond economic empowerment – it can have an impact on violence against women, it can have an impact on children's health, it can have a wide variety of impacts across the millennium development goals."

# UNDP Helps Rebuild Lives After Pacific Tsunami

UNDP has helped the people of Samoa and Tonga to start rebuilding their lives after a tsunami struck the region on September 30.

UNDP Pacific Centre Crisis Prevention and Recovery team members were on the ground working alongside teams from the Samoa and Fiji Multi Country offices to assess damages and draw up early recovery programmes that would allow affected people to resume normal lives.

The tsunami was created by an 8.3 magnitude earthquake. Samoa suffered the brunt of the damage with 143 reported deaths and extensive damages to infrastructure such as houses, schools, roads and basic services, including water and electricity.

The livelihoods of the population are heavily affected, with devastation to coastal and marine resources and to small family businesses and hotel-resort operations. The most affected areas include the southern and eastern parts of Upolu Island with some areas of other smaller islands in the western parts.

An early recovery needs assessment was led by the UNDP, in partnership with key government ministries such as the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, UN agencies, international donor agencies and NGOs.

The assessment focused on the affected areas and was aimed at identifying key priority needs and possible approaches for assisting people to rebuild their lives.

The Early Recovery assessment was complemented by a detailed

economic assessment of the resettlement options coordinated by UNDP and in collaboration with the World Bank and the ADB, as well as a Damage and Loss Assessment (DALA) conducted by UN-ESCAP.

This formed the basis for developing an Early Recovery Framework for the Government of Samoa. This framework will be applied by the Government to coordinate the implementation of all relevant early



## *Tsunami stories:*

*(Left): Samoan fishermen share their experience with an official surveying the damages caused by the tsunami*

*(Below): A Tongan couple beside their makeshift home*

recovery activities by Government and international development partners around the resettlement of affected populations, restoring livelihoods, disaster risk management, climate change and the environment.

UNDP is putting together a programme to support the Government in its early recovery efforts.

This will focus on rehabilitation of livelihood options for the affected populations including cash for work programme and the development of new options such as community based 'green enterprises'; capacity building support to the Government on the early recovery process; and the integration of disaster risk reduction in all aspects of the recovery process such as preparedness and recovery training at community level and improvements to the Early Warning Systems.



UNDP has made available \$400,000 USD for this exercise.

In Tonga, the island of Niuatoputapu was the most affected with nine reported deaths and damage to infrastructure. UNDP is also assisting with an early recovery programme for Tonga.

Funds amounting to \$300,000 USD have been made available to allow people to rebuild their lives. This

included rebuilding the weaving huts in all three villages, where weaving is one of the major sources of income for women and buying a boat for Tafahi island which depends on Niuatoputapu island.

New York based UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), Jordan Ryan also visited the affected areas.

The UNDP Pacific Centre CPR staff assisting on the ground included Jean Luc Stalon and Moortaza Jiwani (in Samoa) and Karen Bernard, in Tonga. Macroeconomic assessment and analysis was provided by David Abbott.

# UNDP Helping Find Greener Pathways to Development

UNDP has to integrate climate change considerations in development thinking and planning and should encourage countries to “go green” as well.

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark shared this message at the 2009 Annual Cluster Meeting of Resident Representatives and Resident Co-ordinators from the Asia Pacific Region held in Thailand on October 8.

“The science on climate change makes a clear case for urgent mitigation and adaptation efforts worldwide,” she said and added that the brunt of climate change was borne by poor and vulnerable people in developing countries.

“For the Pacific Island countries, climate change is not merely an environmental or economic issue – it is about their very survival. Half of the eight million people in the Pacific live within 1.5 kilometers of the shoreline, which is at risk of coastal depletion from sea level rise.”

She added that climate change was predicted to cause even more intense droughts, heat waves, typhoons, and landslides.

At the time when this meeting was underway, the Pacific was grappling with the aftermath of the September 30 tsunami and the Resident Coordinators for the Fiji and Samoa Multi Country offices were in the affected areas of Samoa and Tonga, co-ordinating recovery work.

***“For the Pacific Island countries, climate change is not merely an environmental or economic issue – it is about their very survival. Half of the eight million people in the Pacific live within 1.5 kilometers of the shoreline, which is at risk of coastal depletion from sea level rise.”***

Ms Clark said for a new climate agreement to be reached, it needed to be a good deal for development.

“It needs to support low carbon routes to growth and energy access, and support adaptation and build greater resilience to climate change and variability.”

She said that preliminary findings of a World Bank study estimated that adapting to the impacts of climate change would cost between \$75-100 billion per year in the developing world between 2010 and 2050.

“But if countries do not adapt, climate change could reverse development gains and undermine efforts to achieve the MDGs. By some estimates, forty per cent of development investment from ODA and concessional lending is sensitive to climate risk. If that risk isn’t being

*UNDP Administrator Helen Clark*

factored into future investments, then we are literally pouring money down the drain.”

She said that UNDP had a number of important roles to play in supporting developing countries in the current negotiations for a new climate agreement – and beyond.

These included:

- Assisting countries to develop low carbon growth, energy access, and adaptation strategies – and to place them at the heart of their national development plans;
- Helping countries develop the capacity to execute these strategies – and to access carbon finance now and in the future; and
- Increasing the support UNDP gives to the least developed countries and to small island states in particular on climate risk management and disaster risk reduction.

Meanwhile, the next Asia Pacific Human Development will be on Climate Change. The report aims to strengthen advocacy and policy response initiatives relating to climate change in the Asia Pacific region.



**The Kiribati Case:** This atoll nation is seeing tangible impacts of climate change. Boobu Tioram (right) has been building sea walls to protect his house (above). He had to bring his house inland twice in nine years to protect it from being washed away by the sea. The land where his first house stood is now covered by the sea.



# Pacific Centre Work Retreat

Work-planning and team building were the main items on the agenda at the three day Pacific Centre annual work planning retreat that took place in September.

This year, an interesting way of evaluating the 2010 workplan was implemented.

This involved a team's workplan being viewed by a non team member who was also charged with gathering views from Pacific Centre staff and staff from the Fiji, Samoa and Papua New Guinea (multi) country offices and synthesizing and presenting these.

This enabled the workplans to be viewed in a holistic manner with greater emphasis on cross cutting issues.

Colleagues from the Fiji and Samoa multi-country offices as well as a colleague from the Papua New Guinea Country Office also joined Pacific Centre staff in Lami, in the

outskirts of Suva, where the work-planning session was held.

Results of a survey that was conducted to take the pulse of the Pacific Centre was also discussed at the workplanning session.

Additionally, a video address with Nicholas Rosselini as well as an opportunity to ask him questions was also part of the three day event.



**Team building:** (Above) Samoa MCO's Easter Galuvao makes a point as Mary Ann Fong looks on. (Right) A Michael Jackson dance number led by Tillman Bruett (L) and Ernesto Bautista (R) that wooed the audience



The workplanning session ended with team building exercises, the most notable of which were dance performances by staff members.

## Celebrating Diversity



**Diwali fashion parade:** Gallianne Palayret models a modern sari

UNDP staff in Fiji joined hands and celebrated diversity with feasting, dancing and reflection on culture.

In September the Muslim festival of Eid ul Fitr was celebrated. And UNDP staff were treated to a sumptuous feast of traditional Eid foods and sweets.

In October, UNDP Diwali celebrations were held, with dance items by staff and professional dancers as well as a fashion show.

Diwali is the Hindu festival of light. Diwali food and sweets were also served.



**Celebration time:** (Above) Moortaza Jiwanji invites staff to join the Eid feast.



(Left) Micheal Lal (closest to camera) and other colleagues tuck in.

## Staff news briefs

There are some new faces at the Pacific Centre, and some familiar faces that will be missed.

Corinne Roberts, an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD) joined the Pacific Centre as Information Officer in October. She will be based with the Pacific Centre for one year.

Gallianne Palayret is working within the Democratic Governance team as a human rights capacity development consultant.

Familiar faces that will be missed at the Pacific Centre include Amelia Siamomua, the CSO Project Co-ordinator. She has joined the Papua New Guinea UNDP Country Office as a Gender Advisor.

Stephanie Zoll, an international United Nations Volunteer working in the area of disaster risk management left the Centre to take up a position with Suva based SOPAC. Stephanie joined the Centre in late 2007.

Pranit Sami, Programme Assistant with the MDGs team left to join UNICEF in September. Pranit had been at the Centre since one year.

Ilana Burness, the Programme Assistant with the Democratic Governance team left the Centre in August to pursue further studies. She had worked in this capacity for a year. Prior to this she had provided conference support for various workshops on short term consultancy positions.

UNDP Pacific Centre's Deputy Manager Lenka Tucek left the Centre at the end of June. Lenka had been with the Pacific Centre since October 2007.

# The Pacific Centre... through the eyes of an intern

July 1st 2009, around 7.30am.

"Kavadu House on Victoria parade please driver", I said, nerves a flutter. A blank stare was his initial response, followed shortly by "where?" I was gripped by a sudden sickening feeling in my stomach. Could I have gotten the address wrong already? I had even triple checked the address in the morning. I tried again - though admittedly, with hesitation.

"Um... Kavadu house...on Victoria Parade..."

But alas, it was to no avail for he continued staring at me blankly. (This was to be my daily routine in the mornings with taxi drivers for the next week. In my defense, no one told me the correct pronunciation was actually "Kandavu"!)

Same day, around 7.45am.

It seemed that blank stares were all I got from people. When I finally got to the building and asked the security guards which level the UNDP was on, I was told level 8 and soon found myself at the reception desk of the MCO.

"Hi, I'm Farial. I'm the intern".

Once again, a blank stare greeted me back. Thankfully Linda upstairs was much more sympathetic. I was quickly told that level 7 was my correct destination and finally found the Pacific Centre!

Currently I am in the midst of frantically completing my degree in B.A. International Studies at RMIT University in Melbourne. An intern-

ship is a requirement of my studies. In fact it's regarded as an entire unit! Though doing internships locally are accepted, due to the nature of the degree, international internships are highly encouraged. Thus, when I was told of this opportunity, acceptance on my part came with absolutely no hesitation.

I guess like all interns, my initial expectation was that I'd become the coffee run person, or worse be asked to make coffee! Having previously worked in hospitality, I knew my coffee making skills and... well, we'll just leave it at that! Aside from that, I had no other expectation. I made it a point before I arrived that I would take in everything from this experience, be it good or bad.

My internship was for duration of two months with the MDG Team. What I wanted more than anything was to be challenged by the work I did. I wanted to be thrown into the deep end and prove to both my supervisor and myself that I could do what was asked of me.

My primary task was to research disability - an area the MDG team wanted to commence next year - and write a proposal on it. Admittedly, it was an area I was completely in the dark about. Having never worked in an office environment before, it was difficult at the start to both be in an office all day and read about an unknown subject. I was overwhelmed at the beginning for I wasn't sure where to start my research. Thus, I did what anyone would do and commenced by reading the relevant UN documents and went from there! I was lucky in



*Hibiscus fever: Debra Williams(L), Anne Nacola, Emi Drikibau and intern Farial Zaman (in white)*

that my supervisor, Carol, gave me the opportunity to do real work. She was also open to listen to my opinions, suggestions and ideas. I have to admit it was daunting at times, especially when I'd be telling her what I thought she should read!

I had a lot of fun during my internship. I was actually worried for every time the Centre Manager Garry saw me I was never at my desk. I was either at someone else's desk laughing, giggling, walking out to get food, buying jewellery from the pearl lady or something else that wasn't quite work related!

Needless to say the best part of my internship was the people I met at the Centre and the friends I made. Lunch in the tea room was always an event and there was always plenty of laughter.

My internship ended with the Hibiscus Festival office festivities. Luck was on my side for it was a great way to end my time at the Pacific Centre. It was a week of laughter, colour and lots of eating! I still cringe at the memory, when during the Queens private judging, I attempted to show off my heels but instead fell onto the shelf! I was nervous!

The time went by all too quickly. I was very sad to leave. But hopefully I will come back to Fiji again...sooner rather than later!

☐ In the words of Farial Zaman

## Latest Knowledge Products

### Building a mobile money distribution network in Papua New Guinea

This study looks at the potential of using mobile phones for the delivery of basic financial services like money transfers, payments and savings in Papua New Guinea. The report details the demand in PNG for a system that can enhance cash safety and provide a means to store value. It concludes that mobile money will happen, with banks, mobile operators, and third party providers moving forward to test solutions.



The report is a joint publication by the Pacific Financial Inclusion Project and International Finance Corporation.

<http://www.undppc.org.fj/pages.cfm/publications/pfip-reports/>

### Gender and HIV in the Pacific Islands Region

This report details evidence on the link between the spread of HIV and gender inequality in the Pacific Island Countries and proposes policies and programme approaches in response. It highlights the absence of gender responsive strategic plans and policies in the region and sets out policy recommendations based on its findings.



It states that HIV programmes still need to better incorporate the realities of gender relations and social structures which are fundamental to understanding and therefore halting HIV transmission.

The report is a collaborative work undertaken by UNDP, UNIFEM and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

<http://www.undppc.org.fj/pages.cfm/publications/democratic-governance-reports/>

### Human Development Report 2009

#### Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development

This report proposes reforms to expand people's migration freedoms to amplify human mobility's contributions to human development. It discusses who migrants are, where they come from and where they go to. In doing this it casts new light on some common misconceptions. For example the majority of migrants, far from being victims, tend to be successful. Its proposed reforms centre on opening up existing entry channels and ensuring basic rights for migrants. It highlights



human mobility as a core component of the human development agenda.

<http://www.undppc.org.fj/pages.cfm/publications/other-reports/>

**PASIFIKA Focus** is a publication of the UNDP Pacific Centre.

UNDP Pacific Centre focuses on specific issues within the practice areas of UNDP that impact on small vulnerable island countries of the sub region. The primary focus of the Pacific Centre is to deliver policy and technical advice and build capacity of Pacific Island countries to respond more effectively to the development challenges of the region.

UNDP Pacific Centre, 7th Floor,  
Kadavu House,  
414 Victoria Parade, Suva, Fiji  
Postal address: UNDP (Pacific  
Centre), Private Mail Bag, Suva,  
Fiji

Tel: (+679) 330 0399,  
Fax: (+679) 330 1976

[registry.pacificcentre@undp.org](mailto:registry.pacificcentre@undp.org)

[www.undppc.org.fj](http://www.undppc.org.fj)

## Upcoming Events

### Report Launch on World AIDS Day November 30th, Suva, Fiji

To mark World AIDS Day, two reports on HIV would be launched. These are "Gender and HIV in the Pacific Islands Region" and "Enabling Effective Responses to HIV in Pacific Island Countries - Options for Human Rights-Based Legislative Reform."

### Pacific Conference "Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis" February 10th - 12th, Vanuatu

Pacific governments, development partners, civil society organisations including women and youth groups and UN agencies will meet to discuss the ways of addressing the impact of the global economic crisis in the Pacific, protecting the vulnerable as well as building resilience for the future.