

2023 PACIFIC UPDATE ABSTRACTS

13–15 JUNE, SUVA, FIJI
#PacificUpdate

TUESDAY 13 JUNE

PANEL 1A: GENDER AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Pacific Aid Map: Examining trends in gender equality financing

Jessica Collins, Lowy Institute

This paper examines trends in financing for gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives across the Pacific Islands region, using analysis of data from the Lowy Institute's Pacific Aid Map. The Pacific Aid Map is an analytical tool for policymakers and researchers that presents data of all regional aid flows as an interactive platform. Its dataset includes over 57,000 projects and activities in the Pacific from 67 donors between 2009 to 2022. Many projects and activities have been assessed by donors according to their gender equality objectives, using the OECD's gender equality policy marker scoring matrix. However, incomplete self-reporting led to data gaps.

To fill those gaps, the Lowy Institute assessed all projects and activities that lacked self-reported gender equality policy markers using all available information, such as Sustainable Development Goals, purpose codes, and project descriptions. The result

is the most comprehensive database on gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives across the Pacific Islands region ever assembled. The Pacific Aid Map now also has the functionality of filtering results according to their gender equality objective (primary or significant, according to the OECD's definition).

This paper offers an analysis of regional trends in gender aid flows from the region's development partners including Australia, multilateral development banks, and China. Case studies of gender equality financing for some Pacific countries will also be presented, alongside a broader perspective of gender equality financing to the Pacific's subregions. Policy recommendations will conclude the presentation.

Family size and domestic violence in a high-fertility society

Dyah Pritadrajati, Australian National University

Does family size affect the prevalence of domestic violence? Using nationally representative survey data from Samoa, which has among the world's highest fertility rates, I extend the classic work on child quantity-quality trade-offs to also consider domestic violence. Identification is based on instrumental variable (IV) strategies exploiting

three distinct and plausibly exogenous drivers of additional fertility: (1) same-sex sibling pairs in families with two or more children, (2) multiple births (twin), and (3) a female first born. I find evidence of a direct causal link between family size and an increased prevalence of intimate partner violence by, on average, 4.6 percentage points, equivalent to 11 percent increase. This significant effect is largely driven by physical or sexual forms of abuse often associated with serious victim's injuries. The IV estimates also suggest that larger families tend to have attitudes that condone violent behaviour. The normalisation of violent behaviour in larger families may be linked to a lack of resources available to effectively address and resolve conflicts, ultimately contributing to an increased likelihood of violent incidents occurring. These findings highlight the need for greater awareness of the potential victimisation risks for larger families and the importance of integrated family planning and domestic violence prevention efforts.

How can digital services empower and build the resilience of women and the socially excluded against climate disasters?

Akata Taito, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)

The UNCDF's Pacific Insurance and Climate Adaptation Programme (PICAP) first launched its gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategy in May 2022 to ensure that women and the socially excluded are continuously considered in programming. The strategy will better inform and support efforts to boost Pacific Island women's access and sign-up for parametric micro-insurance in a sustainable way, build their financial preparedness and resilience against natural hazards and tailor solutions to their specific needs. The GESI strategy aims to make climate and disaster risk finance and insurance products more accessible and responsive to the needs of climate-vulnerable population segments, in line with UNCDF's Global Strategy to 'leave no-one behind in the digital era'.

This year's UN International Women's Day theme is 'DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality'. In a small island developing state like Fiji, women's access to online digital products and awareness can increase their decision-making power and agency in the case of climate disasters, such as cyclones and flooding. Women from varying socio-economic situations, whether working in the informal sector, market vendors, farmers and

MSMEs can benefit from digital access. Increased access to financial services can be a lifeline for women during climate shocks, such as cyclones or flooding, both common occurrences in the Pacific region. Mobile apps and other digital platforms have fostered greater access to financial services such as insurance. This session will be linked to women and those who are socially excluded awareness and empowerment of climate shocks and natural disasters via digital services and the parametric product.

PANEL 1B: TOURISM AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Does happiness come naturally to tourists? An assessment of tourist satisfaction in Fiji

Stephen Pratt, University of Central Florida, Amare Wonidrad and Gurmeet Singh, University of the South Pacific

The global pandemic highlighted Pacific Island Countries and Territories' (PICTs) dependence on tourism. While there is recognition that there has been an overreliance on the sector, tourism remains a competitive advantage and an important source of income and employment for many PICTs. Tourism and hospitality is a people business where high levels of tourist satisfaction can drive positive word-of-mouth and intention to revisit. Exploring the context of Fiji, a sample of 502 international tourists were surveyed in 2022 to examine tourist satisfaction in Fiji, across three tourism components: accommodation, activities and transportation. A PLS-SEM model is employed to examine the impact that service expectations, perceived performance and assessed value has on overall tourist satisfaction in Fiji. In turn, we assess the extent to which overall satisfaction drives loyalty to Fiji as a tourist destination and intention to complain about their experiences. We find that, for the accommodation sector all the hypotheses are supported with the expected signs. Expectations negatively impact overall satisfaction while perceived performance and assessed value positively impact overall satisfaction. Overall satisfaction, in turn, positively impacts loyalty and negatively impacts intention to complain. However, for the activities sector, all the hypotheses with the exception of H1 are supported. In this case, expectations do impact overall satisfaction. Similar results can be found for the transportation sector where H1 expectations negatively affecting overall satisfaction is not supported but the other relationships are supported by the data.

The case for tourism satellite account for the South Pacific islands

**Semisi Taumoepeau, Auckland Institute of Studies,
Kirstie Petrou, Griffith University, and Enitilina
Fetu'u, Tonga Statistics Department**

Tourism is one of the main pillars of economic growth and development for many countries in the South Pacific region and represents the major economic driver of foreign exchange and employment. In 2019, there were 2.2 million visitor arrivals to the region, which generated receipts of USD4 billion, contributing nearly 8% to regional GDP and directly employing 90,000 people. Reflecting the importance of tourism to the region, in 2021 the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework 2030 was adopted. However, a lack of comparable tourism data between South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) member countries means it is currently impossible to adequately monitor and correctly track the direction of tourism growth. Nor is it possible to generate uniform comparable data on tourism's economic impact and assess its contribution to meeting sustainable development goals. In this presentation, we examine the case of Tonga's recently established Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) unit within the Tonga Statistics Department. In so doing, we appraise the Tonga case study to highlight the main features, and challenges that arise when a small country embarks on implementing the TSA framework at the national level and outline the features of Tonga's TSA that would be useful for other SPTO member countries.

Can we persuade policy makers to focus on the life satisfaction of the people? Learnings from recent findings on Fiji

Kushneel Prakash, University of Melbourne

There has been a remarkable surge in interest in studying life satisfaction, happiness, or the more precise term in the economics literature, 'subjective wellbeing' (SWB) over the past two decades. Surveys based on answers to the question 'how satisfied are you with your life?' have provided scholars and policy makers with an increased understanding of the factors influencing perceived happiness. The notion that formulation of public policy by policy makers should aim for something beyond the traditional measures of GDP is far from new. Despite the growing popularity of wellbeing measures in the academic and policy debate, significant gaps remain in the literature, including studies of Pacific Island countries.

In this presentation, I will draw on data from the first ever Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted for Fiji in 2021 to present data on wellbeing of Fijians. The survey included a question on overall satisfaction with life along with questions on whether participants think their life improved during the last year, and whether they think their life will be better in one year's time. The presentation will include discussions on the differences in life satisfaction that exist among various demographic groups in Fiji along with discussions on the determinants of life satisfaction of Fijians.

Fiji, at the helm of its new government has a unique opportunity to act in this space now rather than later. The new government has an important new role – not wealth creation but that of a wellbeing creation.

Locally led youth development: Utilising 'Talanoa' to enable community change

**Patricia Zani Samuel, Ola Fou Solomon Islands, and
Raymond Talasivo, Ola Fou Solomon Islands**

Young people in Solomon Islands have traditionally not been viewed as key contributors to social, environmental and economic change. They are often dissuaded from engagement in civil society, with elders taking the lead as decision-makers. However, youth dominate the demographic composition with seven in ten Solomon Islanders being under the age of 34.

Insufficient investment in education and preparing youth for livelihood and employment opportunities has led to school dropout and further contributed to disengagement, displacement and poverty.

It is clear from the size of the youth population alone that sustainable development for all in the Solomons can only be achieved through the effective engagement of young people. Supporting their creativity, skill development and creating opportunities for them to speak into and lead community change is vital for broader development success.

This paper shares a successful example of one such program. The program is implemented by Ola Fou, a locally led and governed organisation working to empower young people to be change makers in their own communities. Findings from a recent program evaluation provide learnings for broader youth engagement strategies, highlighting the following as key enablers of success: i) the use of 'Talanoa' and culturally embedded approaches; ii) activating community elders to support change initiatives led by young people; iii) employing a highly consultative

and collaborative approach to engage with diverse community stakeholders and; iv) mentoring as an effective strategy for building youth confidence, engagement and strengthening community mobilisation.

PANEL 2A: FOREIGN AID

Pacific Islands Aid Efficiency Index

Alexandre Dayant and Riley Duke, Lowy Institute

The Pacific is the world's most aid-dependent region, with development assistance flows reaching records highs in recent years. Yet, despite decades of intense aid support, Pacific Island countries continue to experience limited economic growth.

This raises the question of the efficiency of aid.

For some Pacific watchers, the association between poor growth rates and high levels of foreign aid has been enough to conclude that aid has been ineffective in the Pacific. Some commentators have gone further suggesting that aid has been part of the region's problems rather than the solution. To date no analyses of aid efficiency specific to the Pacific Islands region have been published, with most wider studies often omitting the region's smaller states. Furthermore, the existing body of work focuses largely on the structural barriers within recipient economies, rather than the allocative and implementation practices of development partners.

This paper will offer a methodology to evaluate aid effectiveness in the Pacific, using data from the Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map. The 'Pacific Islands Aid Efficiency Index' will assess more than 60 aid providers, from 2008 to 2021, through three indicators (allocative efficiency; technical efficiency; learning efficiency) and 15 sub-indicators.

A quantitative focus on aid quality is essential to hold development partners to account on commitments, and an important navigational tool for decision-makers. The analysis of the information will allow the reader to have a clear understanding of the region's aid efficiency dynamic and will offer solutions to improve the current aid landscape.

Australia as an infrastructure partner with the Pacific

Melissa Conley Tyler, Asia-Pacific Development, Diplomacy & Defence Dialogue (AP4D)

Infrastructure is an important need for the Pacific. Australia has increasingly been investing in infrastructure in the region, including through the

Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) and the Defence Cooperation Program.

This paper will share results from an upcoming report looking at Australia's infrastructure investments and how these fit into Australia's diplomacy, defence and development goals.

Informed by expert consultations on the needs and perspectives of regional partners, this paper will outline guiding principles for Australia as an infrastructure partner with the Pacific.

Shared perspectives: Critical issues facing Indo-Pacific international development strategy in a shifting environment

Madeleine Flint, Isabelle Coleman, Bridi Rice and Richard Moore, Development Intelligence Lab; and Luke Levett Minihan, Independent Consultant

The context in which international development work is undertaken in the Pacific has seen rapid changes over the past few years. But when new technologies are here, geopolitical contestation is hotter than ever, and fundamentals are being overlooked, where should we focus our efforts?

The Development Intelligence Lab's latest report, 'Pulse Check | Development Policy', presents the findings of a survey that sought the views of 50+ Pacific experts and 50+ Australian-based experts on critical issues facing Australian international development strategy in the Pacific region.

The report explores key questions facing Australia as it engages with the Pacific through the development program: What trends will shape development in the Pacific? How would you describe Australian development efforts in your country? What would you change about Australian development? The opinions of these experts raised issues such as climate and the environment, shifting geopolitics and PRC influence, governance and state capability, locally led development, and gender equality.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the similarities and differences between the perspectives of Australian-based and regional experts on these critical issues. It highlights the top issues that are shared across countries and explores the reasons for the variations in opinion. It explores the implications of the findings for Australian international development policy and strategy and provides recommendations for future action.

Overall, this report provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of critical issues that are top-of-mind for leading development experts across the region.

PANEL 2B: GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE

Pacific girl and Toksave: The success of gender transformative programs in the Pacific

Chair: Lanita Waleanisia, Pacific Women Lead, Pacific Community (SPC)

Tara Chetty, Pacific Women Lead, Pacific Community

Margaret Mishra, University of the South Pacific

Ana Malia Falemaka, Tongan Youth Mentor and Ambassador, Pacific Women Lead Governance Board member, former Pacific Girl participant

Across the Pacific, the level of human rights, access to services and opportunities afforded to women and girls remains significantly less than those enjoyed by men. Pacific countries have some of the highest rates of violence against women globally. To address this, a mix of social, political and cultural factors must be challenged; and gender transformative programs must be created and implemented with these factors in mind. There are programs in the Pacific that are aimed at dismantling cultures of gender-based violence whilst addressing underlying factors that foster the perpetuation of violence.

Pacific Girl is a program under Pacific Women Lead (PWL) at the Pacific Community (SPC), targeted at enhancing adolescent girls' empowerment, leadership capabilities and access to education and services in the Pacific. The program entails applying approaches that respect local knowledge and expertise, through women-led civil society partners incubating transformative change. For example, one of Pacific Girl's original participants in Tonga, Ana Falemaka, cites her involvement in the program as a driving force behind her progression to program mentor, community advocate and now the only youth representative that sits on the PWL Governance Board for an AUD170 million regional initiative.

The transformative approaches being taken across Pacific Girl's projects, are led by the qualitative inputs and multi-country convenings led by adolescent girls in a 'nothing about us without us' approach. This is complemented by much-needed research to develop a broader evidence-base around adolescent Pacific girls—including research supported by Pacific Girl and Pacific Women Lead (PWL)—as housed within the Toksave Pacific Gender Resource. Pacific Girl grantees continue to use adolescent girls' advisory and reference groups to guide program implementation and to strengthen the leadership

skills of girl participants. Pacific Girl's 2022 annual convening began the process to form a Pacific Girl Program Reference Group. The 'Adolescent Unplanned Pregnancy in the Pacific' research report for Chuuk was officially launched by the Australian Ambassador to FSM, Jo Cowley in November 2022, and presented to the Chuuk Director of Health Services to inform government planning.

To dismantle gender inequality, there must be diverse, transformative and effective gender programming that targets all sectors of society. Pacific Girl is an example of a transformative program and platform that is disrupting harmful generational gender norms that subjugate women and girls. To improve gender equality in the region, these programs should be strengthened, expanded and complemented by programs that consult more groups of society—in a 'nothing about us without us' approach to be supported by increased Pacific-specific research.

PANEL 3A: EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE

Spotlighting international scholarships, the elephant in the Australian aid budget: Examining the effectiveness of educational exchange for sustainable development and public diplomacy in the Pacific region

Chair: Noa Seru, Australian Awards Alumni and Technical Consultant

Hazel Lang, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Daniel Edwards, Australian Council for Educational Research

Lorissa Hazelman, Alinea International (Fiji)

This panel discusses educational exchange between Pacific Island countries and Australia and highlights its impact on human capacity development and post-school education pathways for the region.

In 2022/23, an estimated AUD254 million was invested by Australia under the global Australia Awards for 1,603 individuals from 28 partner countries to address capacity development needs and build people-to-people links and partnerships. Pacific Island countries were a key focus of this investment. Governments from Pacific Island countries are also investing in their human resource capacity building by sending high-performing individuals to gain qualifications overseas. But have these significant and often long-running investments been effective, and to what extent?

This panel brings together voices from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers implementing and evaluating higher education exchange programs to discuss the current practices, approaches to measuring impact, and its implications for addressing the region's broader economic, social, political, and environmental issues.

The session will be chaired by an alumna of the Australia Awards and the Women Leading and Influencing (WLI) program. The perspective of different 'actors' involved in the funding, evaluation, and interaction with scholarships and educational exchanges in the Pacific will be mediated through the lived experience of the chair. The intention of this panel is to push the sometimes-forgotten role of educational scholarships for development into the broader discussions relating to the region's economic, social, political, and environmental issues.

PANEL 3B: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

Resilient and sustainable economic transition in Pacific small island developing states: Blue economy and deep sea mining. The case of Fiji

Viliame Kasanawaqa, University of Malta

A concept that has gained considerable status and adoption in recent times, especially in Small Islands and Developing States (SIDS), is that of the Blue Economy (BE), which can act as a key determinant for a resilient and sustainable economic development in SIDS. However, doubts remain that certain operational activities included in the concept of BE, such as Deep-Sea Mining (DSM), are a sustainable and reliable form of operationalising the BE, given their uncertain socio-economic and environmental consequences on the overall development of countries. Furthermore, there is still much uncertainty about the impacts that DSM can have on local communities, possibly representing a constraint and a damaging activity. These DSM activities are often proposed by relatively big multinational companies, with strong lobbying powers, supported by governments of large economies. This research will test the hypothesis that DSM can be considered as a new form of neo-post-colonial activity that possibly exploits resources at the advantage of external actors, rather than promoting local resilient and sustainable economic development. It does it by first discussing the concept generally in SIDS, then presenting a case study of SIDS: in this case, Fiji. It will first use

preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analyses (PRISMA) to address the question on BE and DSM in SIDS and then zoom in through a thematic analysis on national policies of Fiji. A further objective of this paper is to strongly consider the involvement of local communities and local actors, active in the territory, as a key element that can support the case for building a sustainable economic transition.

Assessing the health of aquatic ecosystems in the Cook Islands: A study of lagoon and stream water quality

Alvin Chand, University of the South Pacific, and Alvin Lal, University of Newcastle

Rarotonga and Aitutaki are the two largest islands of the Cook Islands, which attract many tourists. The main reason for the great number of tourist attractions is the wonderful culture it has to offer and the beautiful lagoons. It should come as no surprise that the Cook Islands rely heavily on tourism as a source of revenue. Thus, it becomes a great priority for the country to preserve the lagoons so that they can be safe for human activities and aquatic life. A total of 14 lagoon sites and eight stream sites have been analysed for Rarotonga for the duration 2007–09, which is the main island of the Cook Islands, and a total of 15 lagoons and four marine sites have been analysed for Aitutaki for the years 2008–10. The data set years were selected due to the availability of the data. A critical finding was that in 2007, 78% of the streams had enterococci levels greater than or equal to 501, making the streams unsuitable for swimming as per WHO standards for bathing quality. Ammonia concentrations were also seen to spike at times at the Aitutaki lagoons. These algae bloom also harm aquatic life by sucking up the majority of the dissolved oxygen. The Cook Islands' lagoons and streams are very important resources; monitoring their physical, chemical, and bacterial properties and preventing unwelcome contamination will largely aid the country.

An assessment on mangrove conservation in Papua New Guinea: A case study on mangrove sustainability policy from 2012-16

Melin Wamas, University of Papua New Guinea

This paper is a qualitative exploratory case study. Three different primary data collection techniques were utilised to collect data for this research. Firstly, primary data include questionnaires, open-ended

interviews, and observation. Secondly, secondary data collection by analysing books, reports, newspaper articles, and journals.

Mangrove trees benefit people living along coastal wetlands and islands globally. Mangroves have been the habitat of all marine life. Despite mangrove forests being a significant marine resource, their essential function has been largely ignored. Mangrove ecosystems face many threats from humans. One of the main threats is the unsustainable use of mangroves through traditional services such as firewood in coastal villages and coastal development and infrastructure in developed countries. However, many countries do not have laws to protect mangrove forests from deforestation and overexploitation by humans.

The new data have shown that the government of PNG does not prioritise mangrove deforestation by human impacts and developments as it has been an issue that is not of national importance. The consultation on the national mangrove policy done by the National Fisheries Authority of Papua New Guinea in 2015 was on hold due to a lack of coordination between relevant government agencies for its formulation and implementation.

This paper will review the assessment of mangrove conservation and the importance of having a mangrove sustainability policy from a global perspective to the Pacific region, Melanesia and PNG. The limitation of this research paper is based in the capital city of PNG, Port Moresby.

Assessing the wantok system of the Solomon Islands as an adaptation strategy

Michael Ha'apio, Idea Connection Pacific, Ricardo Gonzalez, University of Chile, and Morgan Wairiu, Windrock International Solomon Islands

In this research we explore the role wantok system plays in extreme environmental events (EEEs) and why it can be considered as an effective means of adaptation in Solomon Islands. The wantok system is a form of traditional cooperation network among local communities. We analyse the 2014 flash flood that affected the Mataniko riverside in Honiara and, the 2007 tsunami that hit Ranogha Islands, in the Western Province. In both locations, massive damages to local communities involved casualties and destruction of homes and infrastructure. In our study, we found that by practicing the wantok system communities were able to cope better with the disasters. In our view, wantok system becomes a traditional means for achieving adaptation. We found that villagers

strongly believe that wantok system has made them more resilient. However, we also found merit to concerns highlighted by previous works in regards the controversy that, at broader scales, wantok system may become a constraint to government mitigation and alleviation policies. Much can be learnt from the way these villagers apply the wantok system when coping with disaster impacts as a traditional adaptation and resilience building strategy.

WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE

KEYNOTE

Women's economic empowerment in the Pacific region

Ingrid Fitzgerald, Asian Development Bank (ADB)

This report explores the state of knowledge on women's economic empowerment in the Pacific island countries, with a focus on women entrepreneurs and women owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Drawing on over 200 published papers and studies, and 11 quantitative datasets, the report analyses the common drivers and barriers for women's economic empowerment in the Pacific. It features sections on the ownership, formalisation and expansion of women-owned businesses, the association between women's economic empowerment and violence against women and girls and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and makes recommendations for further research, policy and programmatic actions to increase women's economic participation and promote economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs and women-owned MSMEs in the Pacific.

PANEL 4A: POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

How effective are the anti-money laundering regimes in PNG and Fiji?

Michael Kabuni, Australian National University

Papua New Guinea and Fiji are the only two countries outside of Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific region to have 'unexplained wealth' laws – laws which enable authorities to confiscate money and assets where the source cannot be explained, without having to link the funds and assets to criminal activities. Whilst these advanced legislations are commendable, are they effective in fighting money laundering in both countries? The

Financial Agency Task Force measures success of anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing regimes (AML/CTF) by the number of successful prosecutions and confiscation of funds and assets that are attained through illicit activities, or where their source cannot be explained. Using these measurements, this paper analyses the money laundering and terrorist financing (if any) court cases in both countries to assess the effectiveness of their AML/CTF regimes.

Bridging the humanitarian and development nexus in justice sector reform in the Pacific: Vanuatu

Alice McGrath, Vanuatu Australia Policing and Justice Program, and Jocelyn Loughman, Ministry of Justice and Community Services, Government of Vanuatu

Vanuatu is enjoying global recognition as the lead of a global movement of over 120 countries which resulted in a momentous UN resolution, adopted on 29 March at the UN General Assembly, to ask the world's highest international court to rule on the obligations of countries to address climate change. This vote is being hailed as a historic victory for climate justice and for small island developing states, like Vanuatu and neighbouring Pacific countries most susceptible to the climate crisis.

This UN decision comes in the wake of Vanuatu being hit last month hit by two category four cyclones within 72 hours. These events caused widespread evacuation and left the country without electricity for several weeks. Vanuatu's justice sector machinery was also stalled following the recent cyclones. Vanuatu and many other Pacific states' courts, prosecution and defence capabilities are frequently interrupted when disaster strikes.

Recognising the dearth of global literature and documented good practice in bridging humanitarian and development planning in justice sector reform programming, Vanuatu Australian Policing and Justice Program is supporting Vanuatu's justice sector to turn its focus on disaster preparedness and contingency planning in light of the climate crisis. This support is crucial in safeguarding law and order and the integrity of the criminal justice system in Vanuatu. This panel seeks to share good practice in planning, response and recovery from Vanuatu and other settings, to support a more holistic approach to justice sector reform programming, and endeavours to promote resilient justice sectors the world over.

Perceptions of corruption in seven small Pacific Island countries: Findings from the Global Corruption Barometer

Grant Walton, Australian National University

Pacific Island countries face particular corruption risks given their relatively small populations, dependence on natural resources, vulnerability to natural disasters, and the relatively recent transition to democracy. However, evidence about levels and patterns of corruption is still limited. This presentation presents views from people in seven smaller Pacific countries on their perceptions and experiences of corruption. It examines views gathered from Tuvalu, Niue, Tokelau (an island territory of New Zealand), Palau, Cook Islands, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Nauru. The findings are drawn from research undertaken in early 2021 as part of the first-ever Global Corruption Barometer conducted in the Pacific. The presentation notes that most respondents from these smaller Pacific Island states were less concerned about corruption than those from larger Pacific Island nations. However, corruption is still a key challenge, and the presentation discusses the sectors where it is of greatest concern. Findings suggest policymakers need to:

- address corruption in politics;
- respond to the gendered dimensions of corruption;
- learn from past success when seeking to address corruption;
- ensure that those engaging in corruption face sanction;
- improve awareness about the difference between corruption and gift-giving
- better evaluate the effectiveness and shortcomings of key integrity through targeted research.

PANEL 4B: PRIVATE SECTOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Small firms

Ryan Edwards, Australian National University, and Michelle Kempis, New York University

The Small Firm Diaries is a global research initiative to better understand small firms in low-income neighborhoods of developing countries, especially the barriers to growth such firms face, through high

frequency quantitative and qualitative data collection. In each country, teams of local field researchers visit a sample of small business owners weekly for a year, gathering data about financial flows and the decisions behind those flows. Globally, we find that small firms are a distinct, little understood population. Better serving them represents a significant opportunity. Small firms often don't fit into a standard typology: they prioritise stability, often forgoing opportunities to manage risk, and working capital is a vastly bigger need than investment capital. The employment picture is even more volatile and precarious. Fiji is the last of the seven countries sequentially, covering over 50 firms in the Suva-Nausori corridor in the services, small-scale manufacturing, and agri-processing sectors, with almost half of the firms in the sample led by women. Our presentation unpacks in more detail the emerging findings and specific challenges identified from the first nine months of data collection in Fiji, offers some comparative reflections with respect to these global findings, and identifies potential implications for policy and practice.

Upscaling local and innovative private sector solutions to social and environmental issues is crucial to the region's resilience

Sandra Mendez, Business Link Pacific

The Pacific's private sector is confronted with several challenges to its prosperity and stability, including climate change, external economic threats, social and gender exclusion, and unemployed and unskilled youth. Many Pacific Island-based businesses already include solutions to these issues in their business models. Upscaling their local and innovative solutions is key to the region's future social and environmental resilience.

As part of its monitoring and learning framework, Business Link Pacific assesses assisted businesses' awareness, interest, and commitment to social and environmental issues that are important to them or their markets. In early 2022, Business Link Pacific surveyed 221 SMEs that received Business Adaptation Grants during the pandemic.

Surveyed SMEs reported investing in addressing the following issues, in order of importance: (i) environmental sustainability, (ii) improving staff's access to education and health, and (iii) enhancing diversity and gender equality in the workplace. The total number of reported social inclusion initiatives outnumbered the activities addressing environmental issues. However, there was a

higher number of businesses reporting interest in addressing environmental sustainability.

The private sector in the Pacific Islands has identified core social and environmental issues that hinder their growth alongside specific solutions and areas for future investment, such as (1) waste management, (2) youth employment and access to training, and (3) people with disabilities as a market.

Overall, businesses report needing more information, skills and working capital to scale up their solutions or to prioritise their efforts.

Capital inflows and effectiveness of sterilisation policy in PNG

Thomas Wangi, Australian National University

The central bank uses sterilisation policy to mitigate the monetary effects of foreign capital inflows in PNG. The effectiveness of the policy depends not only on the conduct of open market operations, but also on the raising of cash reserve requirement. Thus, this paper estimates the sterilisation and non-sterilisation coefficients using the monetary policy reaction and money supply functions. The empirical analysis uses quarterly data from March 1998 to December 2020 under the 2SLS framework. The estimated coefficients indicate that the central bank highly sterilises the monetary effects of foreign capital inflows. However, the intensity of sterilisation is not perfect through the monetary policy interventions. Hence, the unsterilised reserves positively influence the monetary base and money supply. This is evident in the banking system with high level of excess reserves. Furthermore, the findings establish that the open market operations are more effective than cash reserve requirement regarding the success of monetary sterilisation in PNG. The study suggests that in order to effectively manage the monetary effects of capital inflows, the central bank may consider other policy option such as fiscal tightening and capital controls.

PANEL 5A: FIJI CARE ECONOMY

Care economy: A case study for Fiji

Chair: Sandra Kraushaar, The Asia Foundation

Hon Sashi Kiran, Assistant Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation, Government of Fiji

Laisa Bulatale, Fiji Gender and Transitional Justice Programme

Sainimili Tawake, Pacific Disability Forum

The care economy is one of the most rapidly growing sectors affecting current and future development prospects. Globally, care workers – most of whom are disproportionately women and girls – support over one billion people, including young children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. While some are paid for this work, most care providers are unpaid and lack adequate support from their families to redistribute care responsibilities. While this is true across most regions of the world, this is particularly the case for Asia and the Pacific, where pervasive gendered norms on caregiving view care provision as a family, and largely female responsibility.

A White Paper released by The Asia Foundation, highlights care work as both ubiquitous and a vitally important social and economic activity. Currently there are no internationally agreed statistical standards on the care economy, its reference scope, and how to measure it.

Most care workers also lack support from their governments in accessing the social protections and care infrastructure required to deliver the volume and quality of care necessary to meet high and rising demands. This underscores the fact that the activities of individual care workers in Asia and the Pacific are large, gendered, essential, and constitute their own ‘care economy’.

A panel representing key stakeholders will provide perspectives on the challenges in the care economy for Fiji, and explore some practical recommendations.

We will also honor the late Joshco Wakaniyasi’s work on the care economy.

PANEL 5B: ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Increasing economic resilience in the handicraft and agribusiness sectors in Vanuatu

Chair: Fremden Yanhambath, Vanuatu Skills Partnership

Erinah Malres, Vanuatu Skills Partnership

Margaret Alilee, Vanuatu Department of Industry

Mark Vurobaravu, Vanuatu Department of Agriculture

Claud Vusilai, Ambaebulu School

The COVID-19 crisis and its associated border closures have emphatically demonstrated to Pacific Island countries the need for local resilience

and the strengthening of local economies that are not entirely dependent on external markets and technical assistance. Similarly, the growing strategic interest in the Pacific by traditional and non-traditional partners poses both opportunities and risks for small island states with aid-dependent economies. While increased investment into these countries can bring much needed stimulation to economic activity, there is a danger that the voices of local communities become lost within an increasingly crowded sphere of external influences.

Within this context, Vanuatu is in a position where careful navigation is required to both ensure local leadership and community cohesion, as well as increased economic self-reliance. Two sectors in which this navigation is skillfully taking place are the handicraft and agribusiness industries, supported by the locally led Vanuatu Skills Partnership (VSP), a co-investment between the Governments of Vanuatu and Australia.

Working at the sub-national level to identify new local markets and to aggregate production to meet market demand has been central to the success in these two sectors, at a time where economic growth is flagging more generally. In the handicraft sector, the Department of Industry, supported by VSP, has established provincial handicraft hubs – first-time ever, whole-of-province wholesale production and market access facilities. These hubs are catalysing the formalisation of the handicraft industry, and enabling rural producers, especially women, to operate as entrepreneurs with reliable income streams, through inter-province sale. In the agribusiness sector, a new ‘farm-to-school’ model has been brokered between the Department of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education and Training to link community farming production with the diet and health needs of students, and decrease schools’ reliance on low-quality, expensive imports.

A panel comprising leaders in these exciting developments in handicraft and agribusiness in Vanuatu will make a series of short snapshots of these economic transformations taking place within these sectors, factors of success and explore finding the ‘sweet spot’ between local sovereignty and donor assistance in the ongoing development of the Pacific. They will then be asked some probing questions by the panel convener before opening up to the audience for questions and further discussion.

PANEL 6A: FIJI ECONOMY

Fiji's economy post-2022 general elections

Janesh Sami, University of the South Pacific

Following the general elections in December 2022, several political and economic challenges facing the Fijian economy are increasingly becoming noticeable. The global economic uncertainty, inflationary pressures, the deplorable state of health infrastructure, and the recent rapid migration of skilled professionals to Australia and New Zealand pose serious challenges to Fiji's economic and social progress. The three-party coalition government not only faces the difficult tasks of fulfilling election promises but also delivering better economic performance relative to the previous administration, enhancing national unity, and building political confidence despite pressure on public finance. Drawing on recent aggregate and sectoral data, this presentation aims to examine the progress made towards full economic recovery during the post-COVID-19 period and discuss key economic and political challenges in light of the upcoming budget. Finally, the presentation will outline and discuss several measures to improve the fiscal position, enhance economic resilience, and provide a platform to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic recovery.

Agri value chain financing: Solution for scale limitations in Fiji

Lagi Fisher, Financial Management Counsellors Association of Fiji (FMCAF)

Post COVID tourism recovery in Fiji

Fantasha Lockington, Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association (FHTA)

PANEL 6B: INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Indigenous innovations: Indigenous Agricultural Knowledge (IAK), resilience to the climate crisis

Suliasi Vunibola, University of Canterbury, Ilisoni Leweniqila, Fiji National University, and Kolaia Raisele, La Trobe University

This paper aims to examine indigenous innovation using determinations of climate resilience for indigenous communities in the Pacific. Given the Pacific context, these initiatives are vulnerable to climate crisis but have, adopted climate-

resilient strategies and practices. A Pacific research methodological framing and qualitative, ethnographic-case study approach was used during the study, which includes indigenous enterprises and community-driven development projects in Fiji. Talanoa method was used to collect data. Three themes unfolded from the three case studies in Fiji: the adoption of indigenous agricultural knowledge as part of their operating model, practical contributions by the enterprises and community-driven projects in response to climate-induced disasters, and aiding collective community resilience and wellbeing through their operations. Indigenous peoples are intimately and holistically connected to their vanua (resources, people and culture) which is reflected by their environment-related contributions and practices. The paper contributes toward understanding Indigenous innovation centred in socio-cultural and spiritual value systems of indigenous peoples. These are reflected in business operations and community-driven development projects that considers ecological limits and build collective resilience to the climate crisis.

Exploring the Tokatoka (sub-clan or vuvale) Land-Trust Model to sustain the socio-economic livelihood of the Indigenous Fijian community

Paula Raquekai, University of the South Pacific, and Kathryn Bicknell, Lincoln University

'Land is the foundation of the lives and cultures of the indigenous people all over the world' (Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues rep, 6th ed., 2007).

This study examines an Indigenous Fijian sub-clan's proposed Tokatoka Land-Trust Model on their customary land to enhance and sustain their socio-economic livelihood. It explores the duality of merging Indigenous and Western principles of the customary land-ownership model (i.e., registration under the Native Lands Commission (NLC)-vanua based land-structure ownership) and the Torrens System land-ownership model (e.g., registration of individuals, joint ownership, share ownership, a company limited, fee simple rights) that aims to enhance the community's ability to balance business and socio-cultural imperatives. The focus of the study is to examine how appropriate and economically sustainable the Tokatoka Land-Trust Model is for the community, which is seeking to get better value from their cultural heritage without losing their reciprocity, respect, and cultural connectivity to the land resources or the vanua. An important theoretical dimension of this study is the

Indigenous concept of 'solesolevaki' (cooperation and unity to achieve tasks, surplus distribution) that offers a vanua socio-economic stability within the existing traditional shareholder models.

Community empowerment from the ground up: Using Samoan indigenous methodologies to obtain equity, diversity and inclusion.

Inez Fainga'a-Manu Sione, Vaoiva Ponton and, Andrew Harvey, Griffith University; Naomi Pelitte, Ruta Aloalii, Manuia Aloalii and Deborah Perelini, Village Connect; Matt Statham, Brisbane South PHN

This paper identifies the value of Samoan Indigenous processes and protocols in developing a relationship between Pasifika community-led organisations/ church and an Australian university. The focus is on the capacity of Samoan Indigenous knowledge and practices to promote authenticity, empowerment, and equitable outcomes, especially where there are power and resource imbalances between organisations.

Pacific methodologies, namely the talanoa methodology and teu le vā, are used to build rapport and create positive relationships in a culturally grounded manner.

The agreement by both partners to adopt Indigenous methodologies enabled the process and outcomes to be community-led. Critically, the commitment to implementing a culturally grounded process led to a foundation of trust, which expanded possibilities for shared work and projects. For migrant communities, the advocacy and employment of cultural methodologies can potentially empower those communities in negotiations. It is important that universities and other mainstream organisations not only acknowledge power imbalances and support community-led priorities, but establish cultural respect including ceding power around processes of negotiation and discussion.

This article is one of the first in Australia to document the process of how Pacific cultural protocols can be used to develop partnerships in a culturally grounded manner, from inception to implementation between a tertiary institute and Pasifika church and charity. This strengthens relationships between migrant communities and mainstream organisations. It outlines Samoan Indigenous protocols and successful use of equitable decision making, led by Pasifika community organisations and Pasifika church whilst liaising with a multi-campus university.

THURSDAY 15 JUNE – PACIFIC MIGRATION RESEARCH WORKSHOP

PANEL 7: ECONOMIC IMPACTS AT HOME AND ABROAD

The Pacific Labour Mobility Survey: Key findings from the first wave

Ryan Edwards, Australian National University, and Dung Doan, World Bank

This presentation introduces the Pacific Labour Mobility Survey (PLMS) and highlights the key findings from a new report introducing its first round. The PLMS is a multi-country longitudinal survey of migrant workers, their households, and a generous sample of non-migrant households: the first covering all key temporary migration schemes and specifically designed to build a broader understanding of labour mobility over the life cycle. Workers span the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) and the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) in Australia (together now the PALM scheme, with long and short stays, respectively), and the Recognised Seasonal

Employer (RSE) scheme in New Zealand. The PLMS is the first systematic data collection exercise for the PLS, which we use to estimate its development impacts and compare these to the two shorter-stay schemes more focused on farm work. The three sending countries covered in the first wave are Kiribati, Vanuatu, and Tonga. The household and worker surveys are omnibus in nature, covering topics from education, skills and labour market activity to income, expenditure, and remittances, to subjective worker experiences, gender roles, and broader perceptions and aspirations around migration. In this presentation, we use the PLMS to describe the characteristics and experiences of workers and their households in the different schemes, examine how the participation is affecting households back in sending countries, compare the performance of the SWP and RSE to that in past surveys, and systematically examine worker welfare and exploitation concerns.

The labour market impacts of low-skilled temporary migration: Evidence from the Seasonal Worker Program

Toan Nguyen and Ryan Edwards, Australian National University

Does low-skilled immigration depress the wages of native workers, or reduce their employment prospects? Popular debate might lead one to think that it did. In this paper, we study the labour market impacts of low-skilled migration in Australia and offer the first rigorous evidence on the domestic impacts of the high-profile Seasonal Worker Program (SWP). The SWP commenced in 2012, allowing Pacific Islanders to come and work in Australia, mostly in the agricultural sector but also in some other seasonal sectors, such as tourism. Using new administrative data covering the entire Australian population from 2000–20, we first estimate the effects of the SWP on wages of local Australian workers, those in the most exposed sectors, and at different levels of the income distribution. We then explore three crucial channels of potential adaptation: occupational mobility, geographical mobility, and labour force participation. Potential implications for policy and limitations to the generalisability of our findings are also discussed.

Temporary migration and household spending in the Pacific

Hiroshi Maeda and Ryan Edwards, Australian National University

Australia's Seasonal Worker Program (SWP) and Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS), and New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employment (RSE) scheme allow Pacific Islanders to temporarily work in the two countries. This paper uses a new household dataset collected during the pandemic in Tonga to examine how participating in temporary migration programs impacts the expenditure patterns of migrants' households in Tonga. After carefully matching households participating in the scheme to similar ones not participating, we find that temporary migration supports basic consumption but does not boost business investment. It increases expenditure on food, housing, gambling, health, and lending money, and decreases expenditure on special events (like funerals), interest and loan payments. Since the data were collected during COVID-19, the positive impact on lending money suggests that temporary migration could support household finances through an informal lending channel. Turning to relative expenditures measured as budget shares, temporary

migration increases the share of spending on food consumption and housing, but decreases community spending such as church donations and special events. We also find heterogeneous impacts between SWP and RSE, as only RSE increases expenditures on durable goods rather than broader consumption. These findings indicate that households in Tonga principally use temporary migration to finance and increase their everyday spending, rather than, for example, business investment.

PANEL 8: REFLECTIONS ON THE PACIFIC AUSTRALIA LABOUR MOBILITY SCHEME

Reflections and insights from the Pacific Labour Facility: 2018-23

Lewis Brimblecombe and Gavin Murray, Pacific Labour Facility

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme is managed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with end-to-end support provided by the Pacific Labour Facility (PLF). This session will share insights from PLF's experiences between 2018 and 2023, including on:

1. **Unexpected growth:** Through COVID-19 the growth of the PALM scheme outstripped the ability of the system to organically respond to it. In response, the PLF scaled up support and changed its support model from direct service delivery to intermediation.
2. **Sustainability:** At commencement, the PLF saw PALM scheme sustainability primarily in terms of financial co-investment from partners. This evolved to a greater focus on social license and the need to effectively reduce and manage negative impacts resulting from growth.
3. **Labour markets:** At its inception, the PLF did not expect the significant uptake of the scheme by Australian Meatworks employers. Other, particularly higher-skilled industries have been slower to adopt the PALM scheme and have required tailored engagement.
4. **Technology:** The creation of an end-to-end technology platform connecting workers and sending country governments and employers, has been a cornerstone of the PLF's work. Uptake and buy-in of technology platforms has required a deep understanding of stakeholders needs and constraints.

5. Relationships: Labour mobility is by its nature about people. In order to be an effective intermediary in the Pacific, Timor-Leste and Australia, the PLF has had to understand the needs and cultural dimensions of its stakeholders, build trust and engage equitably

Is Australia doing enough to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Pacific workers in Australia?

Lindy Kanan, University of the Sunshine Coast, and Judy Putt, Australian National University

Following the COVID-19 border closure period, there has been a sharp increase in the number of Pacific Islanders working in Australia under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme. Worker welfare and support mechanisms have struggled to keep pace with the increase in numbers and the continually evolving governance arrangements.

The purpose of our research project was to investigate the safety and wellbeing experiences of Pacific Islanders working in Australia under the PALM scheme.

We spoke to over 100 stakeholders –including employers, labour hire companies, Pacific workers, Pacific diaspora and community groups –to understand the key issues relating to safety and wellbeing, and also the barriers that workers face in accessing appropriate support. We also conducted an online survey which was completed by over 300 PALM scheme workers.

The study focused on five locations: Cairns and Caboolture in Queensland, Wagga Wagga and Tamworth in New South Wales and Naracoorte in South Australia. We visited and spoke to workers and employers in the horticulture, meat processing and aged care sectors.

In this session we'll tell you what we found out, and answer the question: Is Australia doing enough to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Pacific workers in Australia?

From the front lines of the PALM scheme: Perspective of a labour union organiser

Lieta Sauiluma-Duggan, Australian Workers' Union

'We walk but we are not free.' This comment by a ni-Vanuatu worker under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme unearths a reality often overlooked for its participants. This paper provides a rare insight into the work of Australian labour unions and highlights some of the issues union

representatives, such as the presenter, deal with to ensure the scheme's integrity.

Pacific workers are encouraged to join labour unions as a legal right. This ensures union representations in matters of employment conditions, pay, welfare, safety and other entitlements, and any other concerns workers may have regarding their work environment. Distant from their families, Pacific workers also reach out to union representatives as 'trusted friends' to confide their concerns.

This relationship often unearths deeper concerns such as contradictions between what is promised to them in their home countries and the realities of their conditions in the farms, abattoirs and other workstations across Australia. They often point to a fundamental question: as they work to make the Australian economy stronger, are the 35,000 Pacific Islanders being treated fairly?

Based on extensive anecdotal evidence across Australia, obtained as a Union Advocate for Pacific workers, and from evidence of other Australian labour unions, this paper discusses the various issues observed from the PALM 'frontlines' that need addressing.

The voice of Australian labour unions is an important cog in ensuring the integrity of the PALM scheme, and this paper seeks to ensure that what is built for the Pacific Family achieves its purpose equitably.

Migrant-diaspora connections and Pacific food worker wellbeing in Australia

Victoria Stead, Deakin University, Kirstie Petrou, Griffith University, and Makiko Nishitani, La Trobe University

Emerging evidence suggests that social connections between Pacific Islander temporary migrants and diaspora communities in Australia are playing a critical, if to date largely unexamined, role in supporting the wellbeing of diverse cohorts of Pacific Islander food workers in Australia. These connections encompass practical responses to labour and migration conditions –such as food and clothing drives, legal advice, and provision of health support –but they also reflect and produce wider, culturally-informed practices and understandings of transnational sociality through which 'Pacific Islands worlds' are made, including in the face of state and migration regimes. As the Australian government moves toward the planned introduction of family accompaniment for some PALM workers, and towards the implementation of its proposed

Pacific Engagement Visa, these migrant-diaspora connections are likely to intensify. In this paper, we consider some of the emerging evidence about the role of diaspora communities in supporting Pacific food workers, and outline a program for research that will seek to document these connections and identify and understand their impacts on the wellbeing of workers and communities themselves. We argue for a strengthened engagement with the insights of Pacific studies scholars into both the nature of Pacific wellbeing practices and understandings, and the wider patterns of transnational Pacific world-making within which Pacific labour mobility must be situated.

PANEL 9 : AUSTRALIA'S PACIFIC ENGAGEMENT VISA – CAN IT BE STRENGTHENED TO MEET THE BLUE PACIFIC NEEDS?

Chair: Stephen Howes, Australian National University

Akka Rimon, Australian National University

Natasha Turia-Moka, Australian National University

Joep Tarai, Australian National University

Michael Kabuni, Australian National University

Australia's proposed visa category, the Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV), which was first flagged in May 2022, has come at a time when the Pacific faces a number of compounding challenges. These include the COVID-19 recovery efforts, climate change action and geo-political pressures inter alia. References to consultations with Pacific leaders have been alluded to, but there is little detail as yet on what and how matters were discussed. It is also unclear whether the Australian government has extensively engaged with other stakeholders, including the Pacific diaspora in Australia. In addition to these concerns, the Pacific's ability to access external labour markets varies significantly across the region. This means that with the lack of a clear selection criteria, there is a risk of overlooking vulnerable countries with the genuine need for this visa pathway. This panel therefore proposes an index to assist in guiding the proposed 'visa pre-application process' of the PEV. We call this the Pacific Mobility Index (PMI) which consists of six indicators namely: climate vulnerability, diaspora, low mobility and access, population, income per capita and historical ties. Rather than each country competing for access, an index would promote a fair and concerted effort to

address priorities of countries of the Blue Pacific, to achieve proportional access to labour markets.

This panel comprises four PhD students from the Pacific studying at the Australian National University. The panel will be chaired by Michael Kabuni (PNG), with three presenters: Akka Rimon (Kiribati), Natasha Turia-Moka (PNG) and Joep Tarai (Fiji).

PANEL 10: REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON LABOUR MOBILITY IN THE PACIFIC

Chair: Alisi Holani, PACER Plus Implementation Unit
Emmanuel Murwisi, International Organization for Migration

Angelica Neville, International Labour Organization
and Sabira Coelho, International Organization for Migration

Noah Kouback, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Circular labour mobility between Pacific Island countries and destination countries delivers strong mutual benefits within the region. However, labour migration is not only an economic force, but a lived experience which can involve substantial social costs and adjustments for labour migrants, their families, their communities, and the communities they work in. Against this backdrop, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) are working together to strengthen labour mobility governance and provide enhanced support to labour migrants, their families, and communities across the region. This panel will share analysis and reflections on harnessing the benefits of this critical driver of development in the Pacific, whilst managing social risks and addressing the links between labour migration and climate change. The presentations will include: a regional overview on the gaps and challenges as well as way forward for labour mobility including the development of a Regional Labour Mobility Strategy; the importance of supporting labour migrants and their families across the circular journey of labour mobility; presenting the link between labour mobility and climate change in the Pacific.