

On the Run

European and Pacific Responses to Climate Change in the Pacific



A Conference Report



The participants of the conference "On the Run" in Berlin (November 2010)

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Preface

The contributions collected in this volume are based on proceedings and papers presented at the conference “On the Run: European and Pacific Responses to Climate Change in the Pacific”, Berlin, 19–21 November 2010. It took place one year after the disappointing “Copenhagen Summit”, and only a few days prior to the “United Nations Climate Change Conference COP 16/CMP6” in Cancún, Mexico.

With this collection we want to raise awareness of how prevailing and urgent it is to address climate change and its detrimental effects on many Pacific islands. The negative outcomes of climate change are manifold: rising sea levels, an increasing number of extreme weather conditions (cyclones, hurricanes, droughts or floods), coastal erosion, a growing lack of freshwater, higher temperatures in surface waters, a growing acidification of the sea and a bleaching and/or reduction of corals, just to name a few significant aspects. Moreover, the negative effects of climate change will also lead to a number of spatial, social, economical and political problems, such as growing conflicts over scarce resources, poverty, and forced migration. Especially the smallest of the Pacific island atolls are highly vulnerable to climate change. For the inhabitants of the atoll islands of Kiribati, Tuvalu or the Marshall Islands climate change is a prevailing issue because many already experience an existential threat to their livelihoods. More Pacific islanders might follow in the future.

Where will people go if their livelihood is washed away by the sea, their scarce resources exhausted or their harvest destroyed by salt water? With this concern in mind, the second major focus of the Berlin conference was “displacement, resettlement and migration”. Scenarios of forced migration and diasporas of island communities scattered throughout the Pacific and the Pacific Rim are already being discussed in the region. However, while international experts are debating ways to counter and slow down the negative effects of climate change and initiate plans to adapt to upcoming changes, we must ask if sufficient efforts are being made and taken seriously by those in power? Is the public in potential countries of destination such as Australia or New Zealand aware that climate change is already driving away people from their villages and islands? Unfortunately, until now there have been no concrete plans or solutions to handle large scale climate-change-induced migration of Pacific islanders to the Pacific Rim or elsewhere. The First Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 1990) estimated that by 2050, up to 150 million people may be forced to leave their homes. 75 million migrants will originate in the Asia-Pacific region. In light of this prognosis, Britta Nümann (Goethe-University Frankfurt) points out in her contribution that the current migration policies of New Zealand and Australia and the existing legal frameworks in these countries do not recognise climate-induced migrants as refugees. It is therefore necessary to rework and rethink the category of refugee and to implement new laws in order to react to climate-change-induced migration. In this context, we also need to ask what rights the citizens of a country can, and will, have if their homeland no longer exists?

During the conference a central topic was repeatedly brought forward by speakers, discussants and the audience: one of the main tasks for the future will be to stimulate greater awareness of climate change among Pacific islanders themselves. Pacific people are not

sufficiently prepared for what lies ahead of them and do not know the best ways of adapting to the new circumstances. They lack reliable information and are unfamiliar with, for example, alternative farming and forestry methods. Thus, by trying to protect their livelihoods, they sometimes take decisions which further damage the environment. Extensive sand-mining in Kiribati, as described by Maria Tiimon (Pacific Calling Partnership), is just one example. Who will help them? Given the important role of religion in Pacific communities, Peter Emberson (Pacific Conference of Churches) emphasised that organizations such as his will be among the main educators trying to prepare Pacific Islanders for climate change. However, it has to be kept in mind that many local experiences of extreme weather conditions or rising sea-levels are not necessarily linked to the theoretical or abstract western conceptions of climate change by the people concerned but are conflated and amalgamated with local discourses on myths, religion or concepts of space and time. It is therefore essential to acknowledge local discourses on “environmental issues” and to incorporate them into educational work.

In a recent article, Wolfgang Kempf rightly argues that not only the category climate change itself but also what we currently know about environmentally caused migration and evacuation is undifferentiated and often empirically suspect. The media mainly bases its reports and documentaries on clichés as well as doom-and-gloom scenarios about vanishing paradises¹. While the situation is alarming, climate change should be approached without sensationalism but with more pragmatism, carefulness and understanding. Not every island of Tuvalu will be washed away by the sea in the near future. Perhaps other islands and atolls are threatened more by urbanisation, development projects or plate tectonic movements than by global warming. Thus, there needs to be a greater global awareness that not all Pacific islands are atolls. The islands of the Pacific are not only inhabited by people of different cultural backgrounds but also vary in demographic or geographic size and geomorphology and these variations, according to Elisabeth Worliczek (University of Vienna, Université de la Nouvelle-Calédonie), affect local perceptions of and strategies against climate change. Some islands or archipelagos such as Wallis offer space for those inhabitants who will have to leave the coastal fronts when the sea level rises but, for this to happen, it is necessary to understand local conceptions of land and ownership. Therefore, another future task will be to deconstruct the enigma of climate change and to offer case studies and comparative analyses, such as shown in Elisabeth’s paper, of different migration opportunities within different island types.

In all, some 50 participants from several European countries, such as Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as from the Pacific countries of Kiribati and Fiji, came to Berlin to represent a number of European Pacific groups, the European Commission and organizations from Oceania. This collection on climate change and forced migration in the Pacific is only quasi-academic because the contributors come from various backgrounds and we wanted to produce a text that was open to everyone. Herein lies the strength of this collection: it addresses serious issues in an approachable way. Some papers, like Maria Tiimon’s, are the first-hand experiences of people whose families already suffer from salt-water flooding and dying

¹ Wolfgang Kempf, “A sea of environmental refugees? Oceania in an age of climate change,” in Elfriede Hermann, Karin Klenke and Michael Dickhardt, eds., *Form, Macht, Differenz: Motive und Felder ethnologischen Forschens*, Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, (2009) 200.

crops, while others express the views of academics (Britta Nümann, Elisabeth Worliczek) or regional organizations (Peter Emberson).² We were especially pleased that Alfonso Pascual Perez (DG Development) accepted the conveners' invitation to represent the European Commission.

In the final statement, the conference participants call for a general awareness of the negative aspects of climate change and forced migration, especially for the most vulnerable countries of Oceania where people are confronted with vague prospects of displacement, resettlement and exile in the very near future. However, preparing for future resettlements and the international support of climate migrants cannot be an excuse for accepting the status quo. We must first of all prevent or slow down further damage and the negative effects of climate change because, despite popular misconceptions, people still inhabit the affected atolls, their current and ancestral homes.

In addition, the editor hopes that this collection will give those concerned with the Pacific region an excellent chance to go one step further in their plans to foster a network of European Pacific Groups, showing potential sponsors and partners that they are linked in their efforts to highlight the issues of climate change and migration in the Pacific. It is an opportunity to express recognition and appreciation for those fragile and vulnerable societies, which, unfortunately, have always been neglected when compared to more high-profile areas such as Africa, Latin America and Asia. I would ask you to be kind enough to distribute this collection among the public, the media and decision-makers, and to advertise it among all those who are interested, willing and able to make a difference! Finally, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this conference volume, especially Julika Meinert (German Pacific Network) who provided the photographs and Dr. Margaret Taylor (Pacific Islands Society of Great Britain and Ireland) who generously proofread the text.

Ko rabwa, vinaka vakalevu, fa'afe'tai, dankeschön and thank you.

Dominik Schieder, May 2011

² Unfortunately Sven Teske (Greenpeace), who presented a paper on innovative solar energy solutions for the Pacific region, was not able to contribute to this volume.

Programme

Friday, 19 November 2010

- Arrival
- 18:00 Supper
- 19:30 Evening Programme:
 - Introduction and get-together
 - Presentation of European Pacific groups

Saturday, 20 November 2010

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:30 Registration
- 9:00 Welcome
Katja Göbel (Pacific Networking in Europe), Neuendettelsau
- 9:15 Pacific islands and climate change – the situation of Kiribati
Maria Tiimon (Pacific Calling Partnership), Kiribati/Australia
- 10:00 Coffee Break
- 10:30 Environmentally induced displacement – The legal protection of people affected
Britta Nümann (Goethe-University Frankfurt), Frankfurt/Main
- 11:15 Climate change and different migration opportunities of different island types:
the examples of Wallis and Rangiroa
Elisabeth Worliczek (Austria South Pacific Society), New Caledonia
- 12:00 Lunch
- 13:30 The response of the European Union to climate change in the Pacific
Alfonso Pascual Perez (European Commission, DG Development), Brussels
- 14:15 Church and civil society action in the Pacific and in Europe against climate change
Peter Emberson (Pacific Conference of Churches), Fiji
- 15:00 Coffee break
- 15:30 Climate solutions in the region: Solar energy for the Pacific
Sven Teske (Greenpeace), Hamburg
- 16:15 Panel discussion: Challenges for the cooperation between Europe and the Pacific
 - Peter Emberson (Pacific Conference of Churches), Fiji
 - Britta Nümann (Goethe-University Frankfurt), Frankfurt/Main
 - Alfonso Pascual Perez (European Commission, DG Development), Brussels
 - Faautu Talapusi (World Council of Churches), Geneva
 - Maria Tiimon (Pacific Calling Partnership), Kiribati/Australia
 - Elisabeth Worliczek (Austrian South Pacific Society), New Caledonia

- 18:00 Supper
- 19:30 Evening programme:
- Get-together and kava ceremony
 - Music by Angela Gobelin and Lasinga Koloamatangi

Sunday, 21 November 2010

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:15 Morning Devotion
- 9:30 Final draft
- 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:30 Networking Plans for 2011 and beyond: reflections on the conference by
partners of “Pacific Networking in Europe“, organizers, contributors and others
- 12:30 Lunch

Introduction

- Katja Göbel -

It was with great pleasure that “Pacific Networking in Europe“, the German Pacific Network¹ and the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC, based in Fiji) welcomed the participants of the conference “On the Run – European and Pacific Responses to Climate Change in the Pacific” in Berlin. The conference was supported by Bread for the World, Mission EineWelt, The Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany, The North-Elbian Centre for World Mission and Church World Service, Missio Aachen, The Church Development Service (EED) and Misereor. I should like to thank all of them.



Katja Göbel

The conference was initiated during last year's World Climate Summit COP 15 in Copenhagen by representatives of the German Pacific Network, the Pacific Conference of Churches, the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany and the North-Elbian Centre for World Mission and Church World Services. Forced migration as a result of climate change was not discussed during the World Climate Summit but is an important issue, affecting people in the Pacific and other low lying islands and coastal regions all over the world. The status of climate-change-induced forced migrants has still not been clarified. One week before the start of the World Climate Summit COP 16 in Cancún we wanted to have a closer look at the issues related to climate change in Oceania, especially in the smallest island states.

The conference was intended as an opportunity to learn more about the issue of climate change in the Pacific by focusing on the pressing topic of migration. On Saturday 20 November 2010, the main conference day, the topics of climate change and migration in the Pacific were discussed among experts from the Pacific and from Europe. The speakers told us about the current situation of small-island states in the Pacific with regard to climate change and discussed possible strategies for dealing with the problems arising from it. At the end of the conference we agreed a final statement as a general outcome of our discussions. This statement was intended as a collective response to climate change and subsequent forced migration.

The conference was not just to discuss issues of migration and climate change but was also a networking event for European Pacific groups, organizations and initiatives. I was delighted to see so many friends and partners from Europe in Berlin. Apart from our guests from Kiribati and Fiji, we had European guests from Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Germany. The conference marked the end of the three-year term of the project “Pacific Networking in Europe”. The project started in April

¹ Also known as the Network of Pacific Groups in Germany or Pazifik-Netzwerk e.V.

2008 with the aim of identifying European Pacific groups and fostering a network. The background to this initiative was the closure of the European Centre on Pacific Issues (ECSIEP) in 2007. The German Pacific Network, or rather the Pacific Information Desk, Germany, was a member of the European Pacific Solidarity (EPS) network: ECSIEP was an important partner for us. We very much regretted the centre's closure, which had focused on European links with the Pacific.

The Pacific region does not interest most Europeans: apart from its image as an exotic tourist destination. Therefore the German Pacific Network initiated the "Pacific Networking in Europe" project in order to give Pacific issues more publicity and to facilitate and strengthen Europe-based work on the Pacific. We simply did not want to lose our connections within Europe. The three-year project was funded by Bread for the World, a German Protestant aid organization, from April 2008 onwards. From the very beginning, we intended to convene a European conference towards the end of the project and we were able to achieve our goal. This shows that – even though the Pacific is far away from Europe – there still exists a Pacific interest in Europe. I urge you to support our network after April 2011.

Katja Göbel

Secretary, Pacific Networking in Europe

Pacific islands and climate change: the situation of Kiribati

- Maria Tiimon –

What I'm going to share with you today is the experiences and stories from human faces in Kiribati. I'm here with you today not because I'm a scientist but because of the real experiences and stories from the people who are living with this issue of climate change. We are among the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. Even a marginal increase in sea levels will be disastrous for our country's future. In Kiribati, the entire nation faces real danger: our own survival is at stake as a people, as a unique and vibrant culture, and as a sovereign nation. Kiribati is one of the smallest and flat island states of the South Pacific. It is the only nation in the world divided by the Equator. Kiribati, previously known as the Gilbert Islands, is only two metres above the sea level. It is made up of 33 islands.



Maria Tiimon

In Kiribati our main diet is breadfruit, coconut, fish and taro. We have well-water to drink and some lucky ones have a rain-water tank. Last year most of the southern islands in Kiribati experienced a drought. Many trees were dying and some of the well-water either dried out or became very brackish. Many of the crops grown in Kiribati are affected by changes in climate. Te babai (giant taro) is extremely sensitive to reductions in groundwater. Sea-level rises, storm surges and overwash affect agriculture crops in two major ways: first, through saltwater intrusion, which would affect te babai production in particular; second, the loss of coastal land through flooding, which could reduce production of copra, breadfruit and pandanus. Nowadays storm surges occur far more often than in the past. High waves break over coastal land and seawalls causing flooding and destruction to settled areas and fruit trees. Cyclones and

hurricanes occur more frequently in the ocean area surrounding Kiribati and these generate waves that damage the atolls, seawalls and coral reefs. People are building more seawalls and, in some cases, local people are using coral reefs because there is nowhere else from which to get rocks or stones to build a seawall. Taking the coral from where it naturally occurs makes the shore more vulnerable.

Climate change has had a huge effect on Kiribati. For instance, already some communities in Kiribati have been resettled, with crops destroyed by sea water in some areas of the country. Right now, Kiribati has just started to experience rain after no rainwater for almost three years. The drought was so bad that even the coconut trees and breadfruit trees are now dying. This is more trouble for the world's most low-lying atoll nation, with just 811 km² of land, on 33 atolls, spread over 3.6 million km² of the Pacific Ocean.

We love and treasure our culture, our traditional way of living, and our special skills that our ancestors have been passing down from generation to generation. These are part of us, they are our identity. Losing our identity is the last thing on earth that we would want to happen. So climate change is not just about relocation, or helping people to migrate to a safer place. It is about human rights, justice and human survival.

Scientists are still debating on the extent of rising sea levels. I am not a scientist but what I know is that things are happening that our people have never experienced in the past. There have been many discussions at Cancún about finance for climate-change adaptation. I ask everyone here to urge your governments to support the call of the Ambo declaration for 'financial resources that are new and additional, adequate, predictable and sustainable, and on a clear, transparent and grant basis to developing country parties, especially the most vulnerable States on the front line, to meet and address current and projected impacts of climate change.'¹ I also beg you to urge your governments to work towards achieving a global commitment to reduce greenhouse gas levels to 350 parts per million by 2020.

In one of our President's speeches, he said that "some industrialized countries might be arguing that climate change would hurt their economic development. Sadly, I say no. It is not an issue of economic growth. It is an issue of human survival." In the worst-case scenario, Kiribati and its beautiful culture will eventually disappear: unless we act right now. So I am begging industrialized countries to have mercy on us and help us. Please give us your hand and let do this together. Once again, please we need your help, we are vulnerable, so please do not ignore climate change. We are small islands. If no one is listening to us, there will be devastation: our land and our beautiful culture will be under the water.

¹ http://www.climate.gov.ki/pdf/Government%20Policies/political%20statements/AMBO_DECLARATION%2010th%20November%202010.pdf

Environmentally induced displacement: the legal protection of people affected¹

- Britta Nümann -



Britta Nümann

The frequent incidence of earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and sea level rise, and the effects that these events have on people, influences the necessity to deal with the legal protection of people affected by causes of environmental or climate change. Currently there is no legal instrument that protects people directly affected by environmental causes in general. The difficulty concerning the subject is in the linkage of several academic backgrounds; the various factors that lead to the displacement; the diverse forms of displacement and the common attempt to try to solve the issue through one general solution.

One possible approach to the subject of environmentally induced displacement is through international refugee law. However, it is very restricted in its regulation of applicable protection.

Before analysing the legal application of protection it is first necessary to identify the people of concern. Interestingly, the applicable law is closely linked to the commonly applied terminology for the phenomenon of environmentally induced displacement, such as “environmental refugees” or “climate refugees”, “environmentally displaced persons” and “environmental migrants”. This paper points out the difficulties of legal protection for people affected by the environment as a cause for displacement, with a special focus on those living in the Pacific Island States.

1. Definition and relevant factors of people displaced by environmental causes

To analyse the legal protection of people displaced by environmental causes, it is necessary to identify the people affected. In 1985 Essam El-Hinnawi defined “environmental refugees” as people

... who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their life.²

¹ This paper is to be seen as an overview of the legal problems within the discussion of environmentally induced displacement. It is based on the presentation given in the context of the conference “On the Run - European and Pacific Responses to Climate Change in the Pacific” of the initiative Pacific Networking in Europe, the Network of Pacific Groups in Germany and the Pacific Conference of Churches held in Berlin on the 20 November 2010. It is based on the forthcoming doctoral thesis “Environmental refugees? – The legal protection of people affected by environmentally induced displacement”, supervised by Professor Dr. Dr. Rainer Hofmann, Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main.

² Essam El-Hinnawi, *Environmental Refugees* (1985) United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, p. 4.

Many definitions followed, for example by Jodi Jacobsen, Norman Myers and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.³ In these definitions different terminology is used to describe the people affected. However, in general they resemble each other in terms of the main factors of the phenomenon. Even though there is no generally accepted definition, one might conclude that the main factors of environmentally induced displacement are:

- the environment as a cause for displacement
- the necessity to leave the original habitat
- the inclusion of internal as well as cross-border displacement
- the occurrence of temporary as well as permanent displacement

In regard of the legal discussion on environmentally induced displacement, it is important to point out the difficulties of these factors.

a) The cause for displacement

The cause for the displacement is one important issue in the context of environmentally induced displacement. It is actively discussed in the literature as to whether the environment can be identified as a primary cause for displacement.⁴ This is because other factors relating to social, political and cultural, as well as to economic spheres of influence are often interlinked in the circumstances leading to the displacement. Therefore, it is difficult to establish a mono-causal relationship between the environment and the displacement of people.⁵

Another concern is the distinction between the environment and climate change as a cause influencing the displacement. Recently, the focus has been on climate change.⁶ For the legal discussion however, it seems more appropriate to focus on the environment as a cause for the displacement, otherwise it is necessary to determine the linkage between climate change and its environmental effects, for example hurricanes and floods, which is difficult in practice and a contentious issue of environmental science. Furthermore, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are environmental causes for displacement, but as they are not related to climate change, they would not be included as a cause for the displacement, were the discussion focused solely on the impacts of climate change. However, there is no convincing reason why people displaced by these events should be treated any differently from those affected by the impacts of climate change.⁷ Thus it can be argued that the focus on the environment is more appropriate in the discussion. In this respect the environment as a cause of displacement can generally be distinguished between sudden onset disasters, such

³ For the definitions see besides others Jodi Jacobsen, *Environmental Refugees: A Yardstick of Habitability* (1988) World Watch Institute No. 86, p. 37f.; Norman Myers, *Environmental Refugees in a Globally Warmed World* (1993) 43 Bioscience, 752; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Organisation for Migration, Refugee Policy Group (ed.), *Environmentally-Induced Population Displacements and Environmental Impacts Resulting From Mass Migrations*, International Symposium, Geneva, 21 – 24 April 1996, (1996), p. 10.

⁴ See Richard Black, *Environmental refugees: myth or reality*, New Issues in Refugee Research, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Working Paper No. 34, 2001, p. 1.

⁵ For the research on forced migration in relation to environmental change see EACH-FOR Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios, *Synthesis Report* (2009) http://www.each-for.eu/documents/EACH-FOR_Synthesis_Report_090515.pdf.

⁶ See for example Steffen Bauer, „Climate Refugees“ beyond Copenhagen, *Legal concept, political implications, normative considerations*, Brot für die Welt, Stuttgart 2010; Vikram Kolmannskog, *Future Floods of Refugees, A Comment on climate change, conflict and forced migration*, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oslo 2008.

⁷ See Walter Kälin, Conceptualising Climate-Induced Displacement, in: *Climate Change and Displacement, Multidisciplinary perspectives*, Jane McAdam (ed.), Oxford, Portland 2010, 81, 85.

as floods, hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones, and slow onset disasters, such as rising sea level, droughts and desertification.

b) Necessity to leave the original habitat

In general, there are many decisions involved in the process of displacement. The distinction of voluntary and forced displacement is rather difficult in practice.⁸ However, it is clear that in the context of environmentally induced displacement, it is not about people who choose to move freely for financial goods or increased income, but about people who face the difficulty of a continued existence. Thus it can be argued, that environmentally induced displacement concerns the necessity of people to leave their original habitat.

c) Internal and cross-border displacement

Within the definitions and the discussion of the phenomenon, it is agreed that environmentally induced displacement can occur as internal and cross-border movements. In reality the movements are generally internal, within the borders of the state of origin. This is due to different reasons, one of which is to seek safety at the nearest possible distance from the site of disaster. Therefore, the movement is generally within the region of the state rather than abroad. Furthermore, cross-border movements require additional financial and social means to provide for the movement.⁹

d) Temporary and permanent displacement

In general, displacement can be temporary as well as permanent in nature. Some people might be able to return to their habitat, whereas other people might have to leave on a permanent basis.

2. People living in the Pacific Island States

A range of environmental effects, including cyclones, floods, the sea level rise, as well as the salinisation of groundwater, affect the people living in the Pacific Island States. These sudden and slow onset disasters are influencing the displacement of people. Presently some of them might be able to decide whether they want to leave their habitat, while others may have no choice but to depart for the sake of their survival. In some cases it is possible to move inland to higher ground or to shift to other islands that are presently less affected by the environmental appearances. However, there are predictions that in some cases, people will be required to move to other Pacific Island States or other nations such as Australia or New Zealand. It is further predicted that the Pacific Island States might permanently be affected by the salinisation of groundwater and rising sea level, thus resulting in the irreversible displacement of people from their homelands. Thus, if the people of the Pacific Island States have to leave their original habitat because of environmental appearances, they can be identified as people primarily displaced by environmental causes.

3. Legal Framework

The legal framework in international refugee law consists of various instruments at each of the international, regional and national levels of law. In the context of environmentally

⁸ Graeme Hugo, *Environmental Concerns and International Migration* (1996) 30 *International Migration Review*, 105, 106ff.

⁹ See EACH-FOR *Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios, Synthesis Report* (2009) http://www.each-for.eu/documents/EACH-FOR_Synthesis_Report_090515.pdf

induced displacement and the previously discussed factors, it is to focus on the most relevant instruments in regards of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants.

a) Refugees

The protection of refugees is founded in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees¹⁰. The universal instrument contains the rights and duties of the people for whom refugee status is applicable, as well as the contracting state parties, most importantly the obligation to respect the principle of non-refoulement. Following the Refugee Convention a “refugee” is defined as a person who

... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...¹¹

The wording of the definition does not include environmental causes for the displacement of the people. The environment, its influences or affects are not mentioned. Consequently one has to focus on the interpretation of the refugee definition to analyse if people displaced by environmental causes are included in the protection of the Refugee Convention. However, many difficulties arise. First of all, the refugee definition requires the person applying for refugee status to have a well-founded fear of being persecuted. The term persecution is not defined in the Refugee Convention, but it can be understood as the sustained or systematic violation of human rights, carried out with certain intensity.¹²

Focusing on environmental changes as the cause of displacement, the element of persecution has to be denied. The problem results from the fact that environmental changes are natural occurrences which happen because of natural forces. They are generalised, affecting everybody living in a certain area and are not in any way acting in regard of certain people's characteristics in the sense of the refugee definition. Consequently, it is to focus on state or non-state actors who act in relation to the environment and in result cause the displacement of people. Especially while discussing climate change and its effects as a cause of displacement, as well as the associated questions of responsibility, it is suggested to focus on the industrialised states as persecutors in the sense of the refugee definition. Whereas the question of responsibility is an important issue in the context of climate change and environmental degradation, it is not applicable to international refugee law where the people of concern flee their home state for international protection. Furthermore, de-linking the actor of persecution from the state where flight occurs is unknown to refugee law.¹³

Nonetheless, the state or non-state actors might fulfil the criteria of persecution where they have used the environmental destruction as a tool to harm certain people, or where they have withheld or hindered the assistance of people in the aftermath of an environmental disaster, thereby violating their human rights. In these situations the environment is not the

¹⁰ Convention relating to the Status of Refugees [hereinafter: Refugee Convention], adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954, 189 U.N.T.S. 137, which has to be read in conjunction with the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted 31 January 1967, entered into force 4 October 1967, 606 U.N.T.S. 267.

¹¹ Art. 1 A (2) Refugee Convention, Art. 1 (2) Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

¹² For the refugee definition see James Hathaway, *The Law of Refugee Status*, Vancouver 1991, p. 99ff.; Guy Goodwin-Gill and Jane McAdam, *The Refugee in International Law*, 3. Edition, New York 2007, p. 50ff..

¹³ See Jane McAdam, *From Economic Refugees to Climate Refugees?* (2009) 10 Melbourne Journal of International Law, 579, 592.

primary cause for displacement but it is involved in the circumstances that have led to the displacement of the people.

Additionally, the other requirements of the refugee definition have to be met. The well-founded fear of being persecuted has to be for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Thus the persecution has to be carried out because of certain characteristics of the person applying for refugee status. Furthermore, the person has to have left their home state and has to be unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. If these criteria are fulfilled, the person will be recognised as a refugee and granted refugee status under the Refugee Convention. As such, the person will be entitled to several rights, including the right not to be forcibly returned to the country of origin.

People living in the Pacific Island States who are displaced by environmental causes are not covered by the refugee definition unless state or non-state actors withheld or obstructed assistance after cyclones or floods occurred, or in result of the sea level rise, because of the cited characteristics: race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion of the person. The person would have to be outside the country of nationality and unable, or owing to such fear unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. Until now, Australia and New Zealand have denied the claims for refugee status under the Refugee Convention to people who have departed from Tuvalu, Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati and the Philippines for reasons influenced by environmental causes.

b) Internally displaced persons

Different instruments at both the international and regional level are also used to deal with internal displacement of people. On the international level, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement¹⁴ include the definition of “internally displaced persons” as

... persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border.¹⁵

The wording of the definition explicitly includes people displaced by natural disasters. Thus, people displaced by natural disasters within the state borders of their home state are covered by the Guiding Principles. This conclusion also accounts for the people living in the Pacific who are affected by cyclones, hurricanes or sea level rise and are forced to move within their island or to other islands that belong to their home state.

The difficulty arising in regards to the Guiding Principles is the fact that they are not legally binding. Moreover, the definition is a descriptive rather than a legal definition and does not grant a special legal status or rights to the person in the same way that the recognition of a refugee does. Unlike refugees, internally displaced persons remain within the borders of their home state and thus retain entitlement to all rights and guarantees as a citizen of the state which has to assure recognition of its citizens and their rights.

¹⁴ Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement [hereinafter: Guiding Principles], United Nations Document E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, 11 February 1998.

¹⁵ Introduction II. Guiding Principles.

c) Migrants

Migrants are not defined in international law. The only definition in an international treaty is of a “migrant worker” in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families¹⁶. In this document a “migrant worker” is refers to as

... a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national.¹⁷

People affected by environmental causes, leaving their home state and engaged in a remunerated activity are protected by the specific guarantees of the Convention on migrant workers. This includes the protection of many human rights, but it does not include the right to be admitted to another state. As pointed out above, the matter of environmentally induced displacement is generally understood in the context of necessary and not voluntary movements of people. Nevertheless, there might be people, also in the Pacific, who leave their home state to work in another state and therefore fall within the protection of the Convention on migrant workers. However, it does not accommodate the special situation of people displaced by environmental causes.

4. Terminology

The legal frameworks concerning refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants illustrate the difficulties in using the terms “environmental refugees”, “environmentally displaced persons” and “environmental migrants”. A general use of the terminology in regards to environmentally induced displacement is thus rather difficult. Nevertheless, in general, the media and various institutions use a terminology depending on their focus or respective background and their aim or intention. From a legal perspective the appropriate terminology depends on each case and the existing circumstances in relation to the environment as a cause for displacement.

5. Outlook

A general response for those people adversely affected by environmental causes does not exist in international refugee law. Depending on the circumstances of each case, it might be possible that certain people affected by environmentally induced displacement fall under the application and thus protection of the various different legal instruments. Nonetheless, there are only rare cases where the requirements of the refugee definition are met. As a result of this unstable legal application regarding the protection of people affected by environmental causes, it is proposed that a new and comprehensive protection mechanism be created. The suggestions concern a protocol either to the Refugee Convention or to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the proposal of a new legal instrument.¹⁸

¹⁶ International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families [hereinafter: Convention on migrant workers], adopted by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 45/158, 18 December 1990.

¹⁷ Art. 2 I Convention on migrant workers.

¹⁸ See Frank Biermann and Ingrid Boas, *Protecting Climate Refugees: The Case for a Global Protocol* (2008) Environment, Science and Policy for Sustainable Development; Vikram Kolmannskog and Lisetta Trebbi, *Climate change, natural disasters and displacement: a multi-track approach to filling the protection gaps* (2010) 92 International Review of the Red Cross, 713 – 730.

Climate change in the Pacific Islands: the importance of island type, land tenure system and mode of existence as decisive factors for possible internal migration

- Elisabeth Worliczek -

During the last few years, and especially during the recent “On the Run” conference, it has become very clear that some states such as Tuvalu or Kiribati face serious problems from climate-change-induced environmental changes.



Elisabeth Worliczek

In my research, conducted on the two Pacific Island territories of Wallis (Wallis and Futuna) and Rangiroa (French Polynesia), I learned that most people in these two particular places do not feel directly threatened by future likely changes: so far, they have been largely spared obvious effects such as rising sea levels or beach erosion (apart from that obviously caused by direct human action).¹ Just as the impact of climate change varies within the Pacific and elsewhere, so does the local vision of what is happening around the world. But mainstream science agrees that the Pacific Islands will have to face (and are already facing) serious problems such as diminishing land surfaces as a direct consequence of climate change (Mimura et al. 2007). However, there also exist other opinions about the actual impacts upon the Pacific Islands, such as Arthur Webb’s study (Webb & Kench 2010), which cites evidence that the nature of the changes to atolls

from sea-level rise is quite different: he says that atolls *change shape* rather than lose surface area owing to beach erosion.

For me, as an anthropologist, these details are not of primary importance: what is essential is to see how people deal with issues locally, what their vision of the ongoing changes is, and what could be possible small-scale adaptation strategies. My research has shown that there definitely *are* changes in the local environment that people on the islands observe on an everyday basis. These changes have been experienced for more than ten years. My research focuses on Wallis and Rangiroa, but it seems that some kind of change can be observed on most of the Pacific Islands. The scientific concept of climate change comes in quite handy for local people who seek an explanation for what is happening around them. But climate change is only one of several explanatory models.² But the fact is that the local landscape is changing, and this is perceived as an accelerated ecological change that has to be dealt with: the reasons for this change on a local level are not as important as the way

¹ Even though human-induced beach erosion is a big problem in Wallis, see Worliczek (2010a).

² This is not the place to go into details about other explanatory models; for further reading see Worliczek (2010b). This is also an issue that will be treated extensively in my thesis which is soon to appear.

people deal with it. The exact nature and extent of these changes are not the same on every island. The actual impact on different Pacific Islands and the degree of threat vary greatly with the geomorphology of the different islands: among other factors.

The Pacific Islands are united in countries or territories and, when thinking about adaptation strategies if some of the islands become uninhabitable, migration is the first solution that comes to mind. For reasons of mitigation and cultural coherence, movements of population *within* a given country or territory are preferable to the option of obtaining land in a foreign country. Hence, one has to take into account the different nature of this more or less arbitrary placement of islands in countries and territories:

- Distance between the different islands: in some areas, neighbouring islands are directly visible (as for example in parts of the Tuamotu Archipelago or the Marshall Islands). On other islands, the closest island belonging to the same political unit is several hundred kilometres away (as it is the case between the islands of Wallis and Futuna). In history, the geographical distance between islands had a big influence on the cultural and material exchange, and family ties are tighter between islands with a close distance.
- Islands vary in size, height and type: an atoll has to face other challenges than those of a higher island, and the bigger an island is, the more opportunities for migration to the interior exist in general.
- The way in which different island types are grouped: if there are different island types in one country, there are more internal migration opportunities than in a country that consists only of atolls.
- Population size and distribution: on most Pacific Islands, people live mainly on the coasts; the issue of numbers is essential – if the number of people who would have to leave the coastal area is limited, internal migration within the country to other islands becomes a possible option – the carrying capacity of the potential receiving islands has to be taken into account.
- The local acceptance of mobility: the local population will accept displacements with greater reluctance if the urgency is not obvious. Western ideas about potential migration will remain mere theory as long as the islanders only hear about theoretical concepts, which make no sense in their own environment.

The example of Wallis, a reasonably high island (highest peak: 151m above sea level) with a surrounding coral reef, offers internal migration opportunities in case of sea-level rise. The majority of the population lives on the eastern coast of the island, and migration to the interior of the island is technically and culturally possible. The question is: how this movement to the interior of the island can happen? The only interior village, Mala'e, has developed within the last decades: mainly due to distribution of land parcels and the distribution of water and electricity to the interior. The land was formerly under the administration of the Lavelua, the King of Wallis. But since the distribution of land parcels in the 1970s, more and more people continued to move into the "Toafa", the northern part of the interior of the island. There are several reasons for this: the pattern of residence is changing from the enlarged family to the nuclear family: hence the increased need for accommodation and individual housing. Furthermore, the east coast of the island is already densely populated; moreover, some residents feel that the coast is not the safest place to live. In former times, the potential

“danger” coming from the sea took the shape of hostile tribes coming from other islands: nowadays, the notion of danger is transformed into the sea itself, seen as an unpredictable element. In Wallis’s history, the interior had already been populated, mainly in times of (political) insecurity. Nowadays, people see advantages of living both by the seaside and in the interior: on the one hand, “life on the coast is better. There are fewer mosquitoes, and there is always a fresh breeze,³ and we are close to the sea for fishing and collecting shellfish. Also, there are churches and shops on the east coast. We rarely go into the interior; it is only for working on the yams and manioc fields.”⁴ On the other hand, moving to the interior is considered as a return to one’s roots (in former times the interior was populated – see Worliczek 2010b:53f). This is a process that has already started in the mind of some people: “Living in the Toafa is not so bad, now that there is electricity and water and we have a car. And there is more space; you can live in quiet harmony. And since there are pine trees,⁵ you can plant anything that you need for a living: it will grow.” So there are multiple factors that are advantageous for the development of the population of the interior: on the one hand there is the concern about the rise of sea levels (“We’ve seen what happened in Futuna when there is a cyclone or an undersea earthquake. We want to be safe.”), on the other hand demographic development is critical: together with an improved infrastructure and a higher mobility. Land tenure in Wallis is under the responsibility of the customary chiefs, there exists no land register and the French administration is not allowed to interfere. This is an opportunity for migration, since the customary system tends to adapt to new challenges and is rather flexible: on the other hand, this makes it difficult to establish binding rules for the whole population.

Rangiroa, however, is a very big, flat atoll (highest elevation: 12m above sea level): just the kind that, it is said, will become uninhabitable in the mid-term, for which an inland migration opportunity does not exist. But the residents avoid thinking about this prospect. Life in Rangiroa is not particularly oriented towards the future; the present is the decisive factor for most actions. But, if the population is forced to leave the atoll, there is another opportunity that is particular to the context of French Polynesia. Based on written genealogies, every Polynesian resident coming from one of the 118 islands can make a land claim to obtain a part of his ancestors’ land: and these parcels that one can claim are usually distributed over many different islands, high islands and atolls. Due to its past, Rangiroa has tight links with Tahiti (these older links were reinforced in the 20th century because of intensified labour migration from the Tuamotu Archipelago to Tahiti. See also Connell 1986:53). Family ties are still strong nowadays. But Rangiroa is also linked tightly to the other surrounding islands: mostly atolls but Makatea (at about 85km distance) is the closest example of a higher island. The Society Islands, the Marquesas and Austral Islands are also part of French Polynesia and have a distinctive geomorphology. So if Rangiroa has to be abandoned, the land rights that are linked to genealogy offer a number of different potential migration destinations within French Polynesia on numerous different islands. “My family is big, we live here in Rangiroa, but also in Tahiti, Moorea, Makatea, Tikehau, and we also have extended family on the Cook Islands. We are all family, we have the same ancestry. I can go somewhere else and ask for

³ The trade winds blow relatively constant from an eastern direction all year long, which is refreshing in the hot humid climate.

⁴ All citations in quotes in this paragraph are accounts from Wallisians who shared their ideas with me during my fieldwork.

⁵ At the beginning of the 1970s there was an initiative to plant Caribbean pine trees; these trees are said to attract the ma’uli (vitality, fertility), which fertilises the soil (see Guiot 1998).

a piece of land where I can put my house. And they have to give it to me, that is how tradition wants it.”⁶ Even if reality turns out to be more complicated, mainly because of tradition’s coexistence with French administrative rules, this handed-down practice is still relevant today (for further reading see Bambridge 2008, Worliczek 2010.) The challenge here is to accelerate administrative processes and adapt them to new environmental challenges.

Just as every island has its particular way of life, the examples of Wallis and Rangihoa show how socio-economic factors shape the situation: in Wallis, the dependence on subsistence agriculture is high: almost the whole population maintains fields with manioc, taro, yams, bananas, breadfruit, coconut and pig farming. This requires a certain surface of (fertile) land per person and, given this intensive type of agriculture, this surface has to be rather big. However, in Rangihoa, local agriculture has lost much of its importance. Some families live exclusively from the production of copra, but most people on the island have turned their back to the primary sector as the main source of living and rely on imported products, tourism and subsidies from the government. This shift towards a money economy lowers the need for big land surfaces for farming. The mode of existence, which is shaped very much by the physical environment and by socio-economic factors, is crucial when it comes to anticipating potential movements of population. If migration has to happen, the population in question will have to face a big challenge and serious changes in their way of life. So one should look at the cornerstones of this society: in the Pacific, one of these cornerstones is land tenure and the relationship the population has with the given land surfaces. By looking at things in this way, culturally coherent migration can happen and, to a certain extent, subsequent changes in people’s lifestyles can be mitigated.

These two examples, even though both islands are part of the French overseas territories and thus in theory part of the same administrative system, show that spatial and social structures greatly influence the opportunities for internal, culturally coherent migration and local adaptation.

Climate change has been widely discussed and is a major media issue: it is recognised as one of the biggest global problems of our time. This media attention is very much in the interest of countries such as Tuvalu or Kiribati, which are completely dependent on international support and which can only find solutions outside of their territory. But with the situation generalized throughout the Pacific, the needed focus on the real issue is undermined: that the islands, which are already having a hard time to live sustainably and to offer their population a standard of living that matches current expectations, have to face an additional problem: a rapidly changing environment that requires additional effort and expense to maintain and create a place worth living in. Such an environment is particular to each island and there will be no overall solution. On several islands, there are opportunities for local adaptation, which is surely not the case for every single island: this is why we need to take a close look at each single island so as to make a competent analysis of the local situation.

⁶ Account of a Rangihoa resident.

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The response of the European Union to climate change in the Pacific

- Alfonso Pascual Perez -

The information delivered by Alfonso Pascual Perez in his position as principal administrator (desk officer) for the Pacific region in the Directorate General for Development in the European Commission is summarized in the three following statements.

Pacific Islands – EU relations

MEMO/10/360
Brussels, 3 August 2010



Alfonso Pascual Perez

From 3 to 6 August 2010, Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, will host the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). Founded in 1971, it is the region's major political and economic policy institution with a mission to strengthen regional cooperation and integration. The PIF comprises 16 member states – 14 Pacific Island countries plus Australia and New Zealand. The Forum Leaders meet annually and give political guidance to the region. The 41st Annual Forum meeting is structured in a series of five meetings: Smaller Island States Leaders meeting; Pacific–ACP leaders meeting; Pacific Islands Forum Formal Session; and the Forum Leaders Retreat and Post-Forum Dialogue Partners Meeting. The European Commission is in a privileged position and is the only partner invited to deliver a speech at the Pacific–ACP leaders' meeting. Participation at the Annual

Forum is a great opportunity for the Commission to meet with leaders of the PIF Member States and key regional partners. The Commission will continue discussions with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on a possible Memorandum of Understanding for a Joint Pacific–EU initiative on climate change. The objective is to facilitate implementation of the Joint Declaration adopted in November 2008 and also to attract international climate change funding to the Pacific.

http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/2008_11_EU-PIF_Joint%20CC_Declaration_final.pdf

Pacific Islands – EU cooperation

The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration, adopted by PIF leaders in 2005, sets out the region's cooperation and integration goals from 2006 to 2015 in four areas: economic growth, sustainable development, governance and security. As a response to the Pacific Plan, the European Union adopted in 2006 the EU Strategy for a

Strengthened Partnership with the Pacific. The Commission uses a comprehensive mix of policies and financial resources to put the Strategy into effect:

- Increased development assistance to Pacific Countries and the region.
- Enhanced EU–PIF political dialogue, through participation in the Annual Forum Meetings and Ministerial Troika Meetings. The dialogue covers matters of common interest ranging from regional security and governance to economic stability and growth, international trade, environment, climate change and development cooperation.
- Trilateral Pacific dialogue with Australia and New Zealand at Heads of Mission level, covering: country situations, Peace and Security in the region, Cairns Compact, Climate Change, Aid for Trade, Energy, Budget Support and Delegated Arrangements.

Pacific Islands and Millennium Development Goals

While some countries have made good progress towards, and even achieved, some Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the region as a whole remains off-track to meet 2015 targets, although at sub-regional levels some differences could be observed with Polynesian countries performing relatively better. In the region, 3.2 million people (including Timor–Leste) are living in poverty and do not have the income to satisfy their basic human needs. Around 480,000 children are not enrolled in primary school and 64 out of every 1,000 children die before the age of five. Lately all countries with the exception of Nauru have reported steady improvement in infant and children under-five mortality rates. Maternal mortality rates have risen significantly since 1990 in the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and Tonga. Papua New Guinea is most off-track country in the region in combating HIV.

The EU response – development assistance

The Pacific region is the highest per capita recipient of EU development aid. Overall, three factors justify this:

- the Pacific region is becoming an "aid orphan", in terms of aid provided bilaterally by the EU Member States and the Commission has "substituted" decreasing bilateral assistance;
- delivering effective aid in the Pacific is cumbersome and more expensive than elsewhere, due to its dispersed population base, numerous languages, low capacity in public administration and large distances between and within countries that make economies of scale hard to achieve;
- this region is possibly the most vulnerable, in global terms, to natural hazards and climate change impact.

Development assistance to the Pacific has increased between the 9th European Development Fund and the 10th European Development Fund (2008–2013):

- 10th European Development Fund (EDF) Regional and Country Programmes, signed in 2008, mobilized €475.3 million (a 60% increase compared with the 9th EDF);

- 10th EDF Regional Strategy Paper (RSP) and Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) – €95 million. It is broken down as follows: regional economic integration – €45 million, sustainable management of natural resources and the environment – €40 million, non-state actors, technical cooperation, etc. – €10 million. A major part of the implementation is well under way, with projects to a value of €54 million having been included in the Annual Action Plans for 2009 and 2010;
- An additional €27.7 million from the Vulnerability Flex mechanism (2009 and 2010), mobilized to help Pacific countries to cope with the financial crisis;
- In the area of climate change, support to countries and the region under the Global Climate Change Alliance amounted €25 million in 2009–2010;
- The Commission intends to contribute with €10 million to the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Fund (PRIF), in addition to a substantial contribution expected from the European Investment Bank;
- The Pacific will also benefit from "all-ACP" programmes, such as the "Disaster Facility" (total amount €150 million), the "Migration Facility" (total amount €25 million) or the "Science & Technology research programme" (total amount €20 million).

Commissioner Piebalgs and Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Slade launch a joint initiative on climate change

IP/10/1722

Brussels, 15 December 2010

Following the Cancún Climate Change Conference, Andris Piebalgs, Commissioner for Development and Tuiloma Neroni Slade, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, launched today a "Joint Pacific–EU Initiative on Climate Change". The objective is to mobilize EU Member States and international partners to join efforts to reinforce Pacific Countries' capacity to address the impacts climate change more efficiently. These countries are possibly the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. The initiative aims to ensure that a fair share of international climate change funding goes to Pacific countries. The Commission is leading the EU's efforts to support the Pacific Islands to tackle climate change effects, with a overall dedicated envelope of €90 million over 2008–2013.

Commissioner Piebalgs said: "The EU confirms its leading role in supporting partners to face climate change, and notably the most vulnerable. We have to prevent millions of people from falling into extreme poverty because of the disastrous effects of climate change. The Joint Initiative is a call for the international community to match EU ambitions and to put high impact aid on climate change into practice in the Pacific."

Secretary General Slade said: "As recognised by Forum Leaders who described climate change as the great challenge of our time, the Forum region remains very vulnerable in terms of threats to livelihoods, security and the overall well-being of the peoples of the Pacific. The Joint Pacific–EU Initiative on Climate Change is an important demonstration of the partnership between the Pacific region and the European Union and it provides practical support for our member states in addressing the key challenge facing us all. The Forum hopes this joint effort will provide inspiration to others in the international community to

ensure the needs of the most vulnerable countries remain at the forefront of global efforts to address the impacts of climate change”.

Considering the nature and the scale of the challenges faced by our partners, the Commission and the Pacific Islands Forum have agreed to a Joint Initiative to encourage – and, where appropriate, assist – EU Member States and other international climate change partners to increase the share of international climate change funding for Pacific countries, and to ensure more effective and coordinated delivery methods.

The Memorandum of Understanding is the first step towards a joint integrated strategy to address climate change in the Pacific. The European Commission and the Forum Secretariat will work together with their respective Member States, institutions, civil society and private sector, on a Joint Plan for Action which will also embrace the Overseas Countries and Territories. This Joint Plan will be submitted to a Regional High Level Climate Change Conference, during Commissioner Piebalgs’s visit to the Pacific in 2011.

A fragile situation in the Pacific Islands

As 50% of people in the Pacific Islands live close to the coastline, populations in the Pacific are the most exposed to threats such as sea level rise or extreme weather, both in terms of economic opportunities (impact on fishery resources, on tourism) and subsistence. These states have limited opportunities for economic growth, face structural capacity constraints and are very vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters. Climate change can further exacerbate tensions over scarce resources such as land or water, affect influence agriculture and hamper progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Background on Commission-financed climate-change programmes

The Commission is leading the EU's efforts in development cooperation with the Pacific, with more than €600 million made available for 2008–2013. In addition, the EU dedicates €70.49 million for the Pacific Overseas Countries and Territories for the same period, in the framework of the EU–OCT (Overseas Countries and Territories) association. Addressing climate change has been one of the priorities of the last few years, with €90 million for programmes at country and regional level. They notably focus on adaptation measures, sustainable management of natural resources, renewable energy and disaster preparedness.

For instance, programmes in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands seek to increase countries' capabilities to cope with the effects of climate change by improving its overall understanding of the effects of climate change. They also aim to strengthen climate resilience and disaster risk reduction in key sectors. At the regional level, the EU programmes support strategic actions on adaptation by strengthening capacity building, community engagement and encouraging applied research. Also, the European Development Fund finances climate-change-related programmes. For example, renewable energy is the main sector of activity for EU actions in Federate States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Nauru, Palau, and Tonga. The objective is to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency that will help reduce dependency on fossil fuels and improve the quality of life in the concerned countries.

Another example refers to the “INTEGRE” project developed by Wallis and Futuna, New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Pitcairn, the Pacific Overseas Countries and Territories

associated with the EU. This project of €12 million focuses on actions in the areas of protection of the environment and the management of natural resources and island ecosystems, with an overall objective relating to adaptation to climate change. The project will reinforce regional cooperation in these areas by the means of implementing in the Overseas Countries and Territories projects carried out in Pacific States. This will notably allow networking between them. This project will be co-managed with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Pacific Island Countries relations and EU actions to address climate change in the region

MEMO/10/685
Brussels, 15 December 2010

Why is the Pacific important for the EU?

Pacific islands are developing countries, particularly affected by climate change and its impacts. The European Commission provides development aid to the Pacific, as it does for all developing countries. The Commission assistance to Pacific amounts €600 million for 2008–2013. It has reached a 60% increase between the 9th European Development Fund (2002–2007) and the 10th EDF (2007–2013).

In addition, the Pacific is of interest for the EU because of a number of reasons:

- Biodiversity for the future of the planet: the Pacific is one of the world's centres of marine biological diversity, including the most extensive and diverse reef systems on earth.
- Sustainable access to natural resources: fisheries, timber, oil, minerals and unknown deep-sea resources have to be preserved.
- Cultural exchanges between the EU and an extraordinary rich and unique culture which is part of the world's heritage.
- Politically, the region represents an important number (12) of seats and votes in the UN and international organizations with which the EU works at UN level.
- Development partnership.
- Trade flows between the EU and the 15 Pacific ACP countries are limited: the EU absorbs around 8% of their exports and provides an estimated 3.2% of their imports. Total Pacific ACP–EU trade in 2008 was around €1.012 million. Pacific share of EU imports and exports is very small – around 0.05% and 0.02% respectively.

What are the priorities for Pacific–EU cooperation? What amounts are involved?

Our priorities are based on the Pacific region's own priorities as specified in the Pacific Plan. The Pacific Plan sets out objectives in four pillars: economic growth; sustainable development; good governance; security.

Our regional indicative programme (€95m) addresses economic growth and sustainable development through its two focal sectors: regional integration and trade, €45 million; and sustainable management of natural resources and the environment, €40 million.

Governance is targeted through dialogue as well as through the non-focal sector for 'organizational strengthening and civil society participation' of €10 million. Given the exposure of the region to the impacts of climate change this priority is also reflected in contributions from the Global Climate Change Alliance (€25m) as well as the Disaster Risk Reduction Facility (a projection of approximately €35m).

Has climate change any actual and visible impact on Pacific countries now?

Unfortunately, climate change impact is already visible and heavily affects Pacific people. Pacific islands are inundated by rising sea levels, increasing erosion occurs from intense storms, and saltwater intrudes into freshwater supplies. These changes are affecting livelihood activities such as hunting and fishing and impacting on island infrastructure, access to water resources, food and housing availability.

In Small Islands States, which are the majority of the Pacific island countries, soil salinity and sea water intrusion are serious threats to agriculture as well as increased intensity and decreasing frequency in rainfall. Phenomena such as saltwater flooding and droughts have further reduced freshwater supplies for the growing population. Moreover, Small Islands States are affected by changes in surface and subsurface ocean temperatures, ocean acidification and coral bleaching, pest infestations, reef fisheries deterioration and increase in communicable diseases. Pacific Small Islands States have limited opportunities for private-sector-led growth, face structural capacity constraints and are very vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters.

Climate change puts further stress on these already fragile situations, can exacerbate tensions around scarce resources such as land or water, impacts heavily agriculture and hampers progress towards Millennium Development Goals. Also, the frequency and intensity of cyclones or tropical storms, which recurrently hit Pacific Island Countries, will increase as a result of climate change.

It can be anticipated that living conditions will severely deteriorate across the region. Certain islands and even entire countries (Tuvalu or Kiribati) will see their own physical existence at risk. Relocation from sinking islands is no longer the worst case scenario but a reality in the making.

What is the Commission doing now to address climate change in the Pacific?

The Commission is leading the EU effort on development cooperation to address climate change in the Pacific. Together with Pacific partners, the Commission is already very actively engaged also in financial terms, with €90 million in ongoing and already planned development cooperation projects and programmes at country and regional level for the period 2008–2013.

The Commission approved four programmes through the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) for €25.4 million in total. Two of them specifically cover the climate resilience needs of Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands and the two others have a multi-country dimension. One supports strategic actions for adaptation in nine Pacific Small Island states as well as actions to prepare those countries to absorb efficiently the expected international climate

fast-start funds. The second regional project, to be implemented by the University of the South Pacific, seeks to strengthen capacity-building, community engagement and adaptive actions along with applied research.

In addition, other ongoing and planned interventions focus on “renewable energies and energy efficiency” and “disaster risk reduction”, which are integral parts of climate-change adaptation strategies. Renewable energy is the focal sector for 7 out of 15 Pacific ACP countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Nauru, Palau and Tonga) under the 10th European Development Fund, with an amount of €28.3 million. The objective is to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency that will help reduce dependency on fossil fuels and improve the quality of life in the concerned countries. At regional level, a programme to improve energy security and sustainable livelihoods through strengthening the energy sector (€9 million) is under formulation (approval foreseen in 2012). It will look at renewable energy as well as energy efficiency. Finally, €30 million have been earmarked for a Pacific Regional Programme on natural disasters risk reduction.

Another programme includes the Support to the Energy Sector in Five ACP Pacific Island Countries (REP-5). This programme is a multi-country initiative which funds renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in five Pacific Island Countries.

The REP-5 programme aims at reducing these countries' dependence on imported fossil fuel as a means of achieving fiscal balance, as well as increasing the availability of electricity services to their outer island communities. After the successful implementation of REP-5, the same five countries will continue the project. They have been joined by Kiribati and Tonga.

Moreover, the €8 million Solomon Islands Maritime Infrastructure Project II provides for the construction of seven wharfs and the rehabilitation of navigational aids. The construction of six wharfs was finalised in 2008. Indicators show some early benefits of the completed wharfs in terms of the increased frequency of shipping services and improved economic activities. The supply and installation of an additional 42 navigation lights and other equipment started in 2009.

What are the next steps after the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding?

The Memorandum of Understanding is not just a strong statement of intent. It is a first step towards a joint integrated strategy to address climate change in the Pacific. The next step is the preparation of a plan of concrete actions. The Commission and Forum Secretariat will work together with their respective Member States, institutions, civil society and private sector on a Joint Plan for Action. This will be submitted to the Regional High Level Climate Change Conference in Vanuatu during my visit to the Pacific in 2011.

Will European Overseas Countries and Territories in the Pacific benefit from EU support for climate change?

The OCTs are concerned by the issues addressed in the Memorandum of Understanding. This is the reason why I have always supported and encouraged any initiatives towards a better integration of the OCTs in the action of the Pacific Island Forum. Thus, I have proposed to examine the close association of the OCTs in the context of the Action Plan.

There are quite a few countries that have pledged large sums of money to the Pacific (U.S.A., U.A.E., etc.) recently: what is the added value of this initiative?

This is one of the main objectives of the initiative, to address donor coordination within this area. We welcome pledges and we must ensure that this money is available to the countries of the region in a sustainable long-term perspective responding to their needs.

Note (by the editor): for a list of examples of EU-funded projects in the Pacific, see
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/685&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Statement of the Pacific Conference of Churches on Climate Change and Resettlement

- Peter Emberson -

The information delivered by Peter Emberson in his position as animator of climate change and resettlement at the Pacific Conference of Churches is summarized in the following statement.

“God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’” (Genesis 1:28 NRSV).



Peter Emberson

The Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) stands in solidarity with those who have, are, and will undergo the process of Resettlement whereby people are being forced to leave their homeland.

Climate change will result in the loss of life, land, and liberty. It is our prophetic responsibility to comprehensively address issues confronting the realities of Resettlement as a consequence of climate change.

Reaffirming the Pacific church leaders' **Moana Declaration in 2009**, we make the following call:

We call upon church communities in the Pacific:

- To be proactive in regards to the seriousness of climate change by seeking to implement adaptation and mitigation initiatives.
- To advocate against the injustices brought about by climate change and call on all political leaders and governments to take immediate action in consultation with all communities.
- To increase awareness of climate change and its severity within religious bodies and communities.
- To provide hope to those most affected by climate change by offering accompaniment, advice, and resource assistance where practical.
- To encourage ecological stewardship and responsible, locally appropriate sustainability practices.
- To reflect upon and challenge our embedded theologies in regards to climate change, the need for our shared accompaniment and responsibility towards creation.

We call upon industrialised countries:

- To ensure that an equitable, ambitious and legally binding post-Kyoto climate deal is secured in Durban, South Africa (COP 17).
- To grasp the reality that 20% of the global population exploits 80% of the world's resources and that the Pacific region is responsible for 0.006% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions.
- To support the establishment of an international convention that specifically addresses the unique situation of "forced climate migrants".
- To allocate equitable and just financing for the purposes of adaptation and mitigation programs in most vulnerable countries and communities.
- To embody a spirit of accountability and interconnectivity in regards to international climate change referendums.
- To acknowledge the close link between the fight against poverty and the struggle for climate justice in their strategic and practical approaches.
- To reflect on the impact of their policies as well as the lifestyles of their people on both the climate and on vulnerable and poor people.

"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." (Luke 12:48)

The PCC believes that failure to act would result in further loss and irreparable devastation to all of creation. PCC understands that this is an issue of ecological justice because people who have contributed the least suffer the most. Inaction is unjust.

"And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

Final Statement

- Berlin, 21 November 2010 -

As early as 1990 in the First Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 1990), it was estimated that by 2050, 75 million people in the Asia-Pacific region may be forced to leave their homes due to the impacts of climate change. The peoples of the vast and diverse region of Oceania face the special threat of whole island countries being uninhabitable, which brings to bear issues of socio-cultural and national identities.

The impacts of anthropogenic climate change on the people, flora and fauna, the land, the sea and upon the rich cultures of the Pacific Islands are major concerns that need to be addressed. Sea-level rise and the warming of the ocean from anthropogenic activities threaten not only Earth's biodiversity but also food and water security and therefore the livelihoods of the peoples of Oceania and other vulnerable world regions. It is incumbent on us all to begin a comprehensive discussion and discourse engaging all academic disciplines on the far reaching implications of forced relocation and displacement of Pacific peoples. The international community, especially the industrialized countries, must lead and take greater responsibility for the climate change discourse and the very real threats to the survival of the most vulnerable peoples. Immediate action has to be undertaken to ensure that the forced displacement of Pacific peoples and their concerns about the loss of their homelands is being seriously considered. Appropriate action can take the form of supporting organizations already working on the issue at the grassroots and community level. Genuine support can be realized by the careful allocation of financial resources for community-based adaptation and to initiate the resettlement discourse at the community, national and international policy-setting forums.

On the basis of the concerns expressed we appeal for greater:

1) Recognition of the threat of climate change to the peoples of the Pacific, who are among those most vulnerable to its impacts. Plans and options for the global crisis of a forced population displacement need to be explored now. Also within the Pacific region the stronger consideration of resettlement as a measure of last resort is needed on community, local, national and international levels.

2) Commitment to moral and ethical responsibility to the issue of climate-induced resettlement. This is not just because of the historical and ecological debt, which industrialized countries carry, but an issue of justice. Every individual, nation and international group needs to take responsibility and therefore take on the urgent need for more immediate action.

3) Consideration of the human-rights aspect of climate change. The dignity of people displaced by climate change has to be a guiding principle of all plans and actions taken. In

the same way the human rights of the communities receiving displaced people need to be respected.

4) Clarification of terminology. This is to allow for the application and holistic protection of international protection regimes to people displaced by climate change. People who will be forced to migrate owing to climate change have to be included in the terminology currently used and regimes already in place¹.

5) Support in identifying land and other resources for people displaced by climate change, nationally, inter-regionally and internationally. The international community is being urged to move swiftly on this issue and to genuinely commit to generously financing the mitigation and adaptation projects of communities and countries most vulnerable to climate change.

6) Funding. This is crucial as people displaced by climate change are primarily from regions in the developing global South. Industrialized countries need to provide financial resources that are new, additional, adequate, predictable, and sustainable, on an intelligible transparent grant basis.

7) Respect for the traditions and cultures of people displaced by climate change, which must be a precondition to all actions undertaken. As such the principle of free, prior and informed consent must prevail. Indigenous peoples' link to the land is fundamental for most of the Pacific communities: the decision to resettle needs to be well-founded and unavoidable. Furthermore, climate-change migrants need to be empowered to become agents of their own resettlement process, not victims of it. Capacity-building, transparent consultations, the provision of relevant information and rehabilitation at resettlement destinations are to be guidelines for the required help from outside. The preservation of their way of life (right to culture), as reflected in traditional knowledge and local culture, including all aspects of personal, family, social, political and spiritual life, needs to be strongly supported to help affected migrants maintain and keep alive their cultures, languages and national identities.

8) Collaboration between national and international groups, European and Pacific NGOs, churches and governments. This needs to be enhanced so as to lobby for stronger Carbon Reduction Commitment and a fair, just and legally binding agreement from the COP 16 in Cancún, Mexico, and the COP 17 in South Africa. The meeting also reaffirms its commitment to the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Road Map.

9) Awareness of the current impacts and future threats of climate change, which needs to be amplified among the media and public on national and international levels. The issue of

¹ The 1951 Refugee Convention (United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees) definition does not cover climate refugees (because it only speaks of *persecution*). The terms Climate Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Environmentally Displaced Persons (EDPs) and Climate Change Displaced Persons are problematic for not covering pre- and post- displacement. Terms used by the climate resettlement discourse to date are: climate change victims, forced climate migrants and climate refugees, but a legal definition needs to be agreed so that action can be taken by the supra-national organizations and nation-states. From a legal perspective, the lack of a special term referring to cross-border displacement due to climate change implies a deficiency in both state protection and international human rights law. The question of the legal status of people displaced by climate change needs to be discussed and the climate change issue be integrated in the human rights agenda.

climate change resettlement needs to be on the official agenda of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), member countries of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), the European Union (EU), African Union (AU), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the United Nations General Assembly and UN Economic and Social Council.

10) Efforts in pleading for the strongest outcome of the UNFCCC COP 16 and 17 that is fair, just and legally binding; an agreement that is based on most recent scientific findings and is more than adequate to safeguard planet Earth and its inhabitants.



Julika Meinert and Peter Emberson preparing the Final Statement

Participating organizations and institutions from the Pacific

The Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP), Australia

The Pacific Calling Partnership began in May 2006 in response to a series of calls that had come from the peoples in low-lying Pacific Islands. The PCP brings together a number of significant Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), school groups, community organizations, and individuals who all recognise Australia's ecological debt to Kiribati, Tuvalu, parts of the Torres Strait and other low-lying Pacific Island neighbours. These are joined in partnership with individuals and organizations living in the Pacific and migrant groups in Australia. New members are always welcome.

Together we strive, in all our endeavours, to listen to and be accountable to voices from the Pacific and Torres Strait and to raise awareness about the impacts on them of high greenhouse-gas emissions from industrialised countries. The PCP meets regularly in order to co-ordinate, energize, and review the progress that the campaign is making. Several partners are members of the Climate Action Network of Australia (CANA) and are active participants in CANA processes.

The PCP aims to build a consensus that drives support for Australia, in partnership with our neighbours, to undertake an audit of the civil, cultural, economic and environmental resilience of all countries within the Pacific region. In this way we can work towards building a positive, communitarian and sustainable response based on Human Rights to the increased water, food, fuel and land stresses that are predicted under present circumstances and future climate change scenarios.

- The PCP raises awareness in Australia and the Pacific of a sense of connection by celebrating and making known the human stories that bind us.
- The PCP seeks to encourage leadership and advocacy skills around climate change issues among interested Pacific and Torres Strait Islanders.
- The PCP supports the development of a regional approach to climate-related migration and labour mobility that prioritises the Pacific and increases the choices of Pacific Islanders.
- The PCP supports the statement by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) that: 'The greatest form of mitigation, and assistance to adaptation, Australia could provide to the Pacific is to instigate significant cuts in our greenhouse gas emission and move away from a fossil fuel-based economy.'

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The Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), Fiji

The Pacific Conference of Churches seeks to pursue the visible unity of the member churches of the organization and promote the ecumenical movement in the Pacific region. The Pacific Conference of Churches is the Regional Ecumenical Organization representing the churches at all levels in the Pacific region. It seeks the visible unity of the Church on issues of justice, peace and integrity of creation, initiatives on capacity-building, and solidarity of its members during times of natural disasters and internal social upheavals. It was founded in 1961 after the first meeting held at the Malua Theological Seminary in Samoa. From very modest beginnings in the early 1960s, its membership today stands at 28 Pacific country-member churches and eight national councils of churches.

The Pacific Conference of Churches is a fellowship of churches and church organizations that seek to fulfil collaboratively their common calling to the Glory of the One Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In essence, PCC strives toward a vision of a Pacific region that is characterized by the values of unity, solidarity, justice, peace, dialogue and leadership after the heart and mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a spirituality that gives grounding and substance to PCC's existence and to the work it does.

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Participating organizations and institutions from Europe

The Austrian–South Pacific Society (OSPG)

Profile of the Austrian–South Pacific Society

The Austrian–South Pacific Society (Österreichisch–Südpazifische Gesellschaft, OSPG) is a non-profit association whose aim is to offer a platform to all those interested in Oceania. Information regarding the diversity of the Pacific cultures is collected, published and made available to a wide public. In addition, great emphasis is laid on the cultivation of cultural and social contacts between Austria and the South Pacific countries.

The society was founded in 1996 and has its headquarters at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Vienna. The name chosen for the society reflects the fact that the majority of the Pacific islands is situated south of the equator, and that it is this island area which is of interest to our members. Micronesia, Hawaii and the North Pacific islands are, however, also included here.

The membership is free to everyone who is interested in the Pacific Islands with no limits of academic background or citizenship.

Aims of the Austrian–South Pacific Society

Academic work from a social and cultural anthropological perspective is a key concern of the OSPG. Other activities performed by the OSPG are the cultivation of contacts with universities and research institutes in the South Pacific area, and the support of research to that area. This included the organization of the Fifth Conference of the European Society for Oceanists (ESfO) in July 2002 in Vienna.

Alongside academic work, the OSPG also conceives of itself as a forum for information and discussion on topics relevant to the Pacific, and it is also open to individuals whose interest is not primarily academic. Data provision for the Austrian media is one of the society's undertakings, as is the cultivation of contacts with people who come from the South Pacific area and who live in Austria.

Activities of the Austrian–South Pacific Society

Lectures: the OSPG organizes regular lectures at which speakers from Austria and abroad present their research on the South Pacific. This lecture series is interdisciplinary and multimedia in its orientation. Papers are followed by informal get-togethers. Since a few years ago, each year is dedicated to one overall topic and after women, violence/conflicts, and migration, the overall topic for 2010 was “climate change in the Pacific”.

Publications: along with up-to-the-minute publications (“Dossiers”) covering topical issues and/or outstanding lectures, the OSPG publishes an annual journal – *Novara* – which brings together academic contributions from Austrian and foreign researchers in different disciplines

and at different institutions. These contributions pertain to a particular topic, selected as the theme of the journal.

Projects: in cooperation with other organizations, academic projects are initiated and carried out, such as the production of a CD-ROM about the journey of the “Novara” with the Austrian-Philippine Society. A project documenting “Traces of the ‘South Seas’ in Vienna” is currently in process as is a project about “Austrian migration to New Zealand and the Pacific”.

Partners of the Austrian–South Pacific Society

The OSPG is a member of the overall organization, Austrian-Foreign Societies, and of the Oceania group of the German Society of Anthropology. The association also works in cooperation with the European Society for Oceanists (ESfO), the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Vienna, the Institute of Non-European Architecture at the Technical University of Vienna, the Anthropological Society of Vienna, and other academic societies and institutions inside and outside Austria.

Novara – Contributions to Pacific Research by the Austrian–South Pacific Society

Since 1998 an annual journal is published by the OSPG, always dedicated to one topic. As one aim is to combine research findings from Austria and from abroad the form of anthologies is the regular one. Although these publications try to inform the German-speaking audience about latest research findings on the Pacific Islands as publications to this region are difficult and rare to get in Middle Europe. On the other hand the series are a chance to present to the international audience what kind of research is done in Austria and therefore the language of the *Novara* may vary, from editions written entirely in German to those with mixed German and English or entirely English.

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The German East Timor Society (DOTG)

The German East Timor Society (Deutsche Osttimor Gesellschaft DOTG) is a non-profit, non-denominational and non-partisan working group located in Cologne, Germany, founded in March 2003. Our members from Germany and East Timor interact through regular personal contact, regular meetings and by means of modern communication. We are committed to develop and sustain German–East Timorese relations in a variety of sectors. Our objective is to provide an informative platform on East Timor through our website www.osttimor.de and our quarterly newsletter as well as to increase the exchange of information on and from East Timor. The German East Timor Society actively supports long-term development projects, e.g., a scholarship programme for students or the Maternidade, a centre where pregnant women and young mothers get advice and join workshops on health; and also short-term projects with single payments. Additionally, we promote scientific and cultural exchange between Germany and East Timor with public events and lectures and with participation in workshops and international conferences. Stay informed about our upcoming events and activities by joining our newsletter mailing list.

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The German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA)

The GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, formerly the German Overseas Institute, is a research institute focused on political, economic and social developments in Africa, Asia, Latin America, North Africa, and the Middle East based in Hamburg. Through a unique combination of area and comparative area studies, the GIGA examines not only the issues and challenges facing these specific regions but also new developments in North-South and South-South relationships. Its research activities combine systematic and comparative area studies within the framework of a two-dimensional organizational structure: specialists on different world regions are simultaneously assigned to four area studies research institutes and four overarching research programmes.

The GIGA is the largest German research institute for area and comparative area studies. It is also among the largest in Europe and opened its Berlin office in 2009. The GIGA is a member of the Leibniz Association, a scientific organization comprised of 86 non-university research institutes and scientific service facilities. It is jointly financed by the Federal Republic of Germany (Federal Foreign Office) and the State of Hamburg (Ministry of Science and Research). The budget is currently €6 million per year. For further information, please visit our homepage www.giga-hamburg.de and join our mailing list.

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The Netherlands Kiribati Friendship Association

The Netherlands Kiribati Friendship Association is a small group of 12 friends who all have a connection with Kiribati. Many of them once worked as volunteers on one of the Kiribati islands, from 1960 until the present day. They meet every year and share their interest in Kiribati.

They are active in fundraising by sponsoring runs with schools, selling a CD with pictures and stories about all aspects of Kiribati life and culture, selling beautiful postcards and sponsoring ice-cold dips in the North Sea in wintertime. The funds are sent to the school for disabled children on Tarawa, one of the Kiribati islands. The connection between this association and the people involved with the school for the disabled is strong.

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The Pacific Information Desk (Pazifik-Informationsstelle), Germany

History

The Pacific Information Desk is an ecumenical initiative, which evolved from the cooperation of an inter-confessional solidarity movement among church organizations. The office was established on 1 February 1989 in Neuendettelsau, Central Bavaria as an office for media and public relations. It is located in the rooms of Mission EineWelt – the Centre for Partnership, Development and Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. After the closure of the Pacific Department of the Geneva-based World Council of Churches in 2003 and the withdrawal of German Government cooperation organizations from the Pacific region, the Pacific Information Desk is the only remaining body in the German-speaking area for people interested in Oceania.

Activities

The purpose of this co-operation, and the task of this office, is to inform the public on important economic, social and environmental events in the Asia-Pacific area. Special emphasis is being made on the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in that region. They mainly work for peace, human rights, political and economic independence and environmental protection. A number of churches engaged in the same issues co-operate with these NGOs. The Pacific Information Desk addresses its work mainly to public educational institutions, universities, the media, development cooperation working groups, communities and individuals that increasingly ask for information on the Pacific. The worldwide economic cooperation, global ecological problems and tourism are reasons for the Pacific's emergence from its hitherto shadowy existence and its growing recognition within the Western world. The Pacific Information Desk gives information on the difficult situation of many Pacific island countries. Thereby, its work is aimed at change in the Pacific itself but also in the politically and economically leading industrial states. An important activity consists of linking-up different groups, organizations and individuals working on the Pacific. Besides, the Pacific Information Desk keeps in touch with European and Pacific initiatives. Moreover, the Pacific Information Desk tries to counter classical Pacific Island clichés (such as summer, sun, and Hula-dances) by information and educational activities. Furthermore, the intention is to make the realities of Pacific life more understandable. The Pacific Information Desk is funded and supported by the German Pacific Network (Pazifik-Netzwerk e.V.) and five church organizations: Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW, Hamburg), Mission EineWelt – Centre for Partnership, Development and Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (MEW, Neuendettelsau), North-Elbian Centre for World Mission and Church World Service (NMZ, Hamburg), Lutheran Mission Work Leipzig (LMW), and Missio Aachen.

Structure and Finances

The work of the Pacific Information Desk is guided by a steering committee, in which the German Pacific Network and the five church organizations are represented proportionately. The committee meets twice a year and defines the main tasks of the office. The church institutions fund the Pacific Information Desk's personal and material costs. The office is

supervised by the Director of Mission EineWelt (MEW). There is a close and successful cooperation with the Department for Papua New Guinea, Pacific and East Asia of MEW. Together with the **German Pacific Network**, funds are raised at the Catholic Fund, Munich, and the Church Development Service's (EED) Programme for Education and Publicity (ABP), Bonn.

- **Topics**

- The Pacific Information Desk – jointly with the German Pacific Network (www.pazifik-netzwerk.org) – focuses on the following issues:
- Nuclear testing
- Mining
- Biodiversity
- Women / Gender
- Violence
- Climate Change
- Land Tenure
- Social Development
- Tourism
- Independence
- Economy
- Politics and History

- **Services**

- The Pacific Information Desk:
- researches and provides information on Pacific issues;
- strengthens and broadens the existing network of people interested in the Pacific;
- briefs travellers and emigrants;
- edits publications (see below);
- lends touring exhibitions (on nuclear tests in the Pacific, climate change);
- maintains a library and a DVD and audio-archive (reports and music) together with a media lending service (see below);
- gives lectures at conferences, seminars, in associations, in communities etc.;
- recommends expert lecturers on Pacific topics;
- cares for visitors from the Pacific region;
- runs a calendar of events on its website.

- **Publications**

- The quarterly periodical *Pazifik Aktuell – Nachrichten aus Papua-Neuguinea und den Inselstaaten* is published (circulation 1,350) on behalf of the German Pacific Network, the Pacific Information Desk distributes the *Rundbrief – Forum für Mitglieder und Freunde des Pazifik-Netzwerkes* quarterly (circulation 550);
- Irregularly, "Dossiers" and "Blickpunkte" are issued;
- Several further publications (monographs, anthologies, readers, brochures etc.) on the Pacific have been edited and are now available.
- On the Pacific Information Desk's Website (<http://www.pazifik-infostelle.org>) as well as in the regularly updated publication catalogue (available on demand from the Pacific Information Desk) all publications available are listed.

Media Lending Service

A separate catalogue of VCR/DVD and audio-media are available on request. The listed VCR/DVD, audio cassettes and CDs can be borrowed against the refund of postage and handling fees for a maximum of one month. The two exhibitions can also be borrowed on equal terms. More information may be found on our website www.pazifik-info.stelle.org

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The Pacific Islands Society of the United Kingdom and Ireland (PISUKI)

Creation and Aims of the Society

The Pacific Islands Society of the United Kingdom and Ireland (PISUKI) was formed in London in December 1981, with the help and encouragement of Dr Friedrich Steinbauer of the German Pacific Society and of representatives of the Pacific Island diaspora, including the well-known Fijian Methodist minister and human rights campaigner, Rev. Akuila Yabaki. The Society is an independent, non-profit making organization. It is funded by its members' subscriptions, which are kept at a level sufficient to meet basic running costs, plus fees charged to meet the expenses of special events, as necessary. PISUKI aims to promote friendship and communication between the peoples and countries of the Pacific Islands and the United Kingdom and Ireland. We have more than 300 members, many of whom have lived, worked or travelled in the Pacific. Among the membership are Pacific Islanders living in the British Isles and people who have worked overseas in voluntary organizations (such as VSO), diplomats, tourists, academics, and clergy.

Pacific Links

PISUKI encourages links with the Pacific Islands through personal relationships, raising the public profile of the Pacific Islands in the UK and Ireland and advocating Pacific Islands interests and concerns. It

- brings people with Pacific Islands interests into contact with each other through social gatherings and networks;
- offers assistance and hospitality to visiting and resident Pacific Islanders and welcomes prominent visitors from the Pacific Islands;
- promotes knowledge and understanding of the Pacific Islands, its peoples, cultures and current affairs, through public meetings and discussions, conferences and artistic displays, publicized in *PISUKI Report* and *The Outrigger*;
- advocates Pacific Islands interests on issues involving government and other institutions
- and bodies in the UK and Ireland;
- acts as an umbrella organization for societies and affiliated organizations representing
- particular Pacific Island countries or interests, in the UK, Ireland, and Europe;
- provides a network of expertise supplying accurate information on Pacific Islands topics and issues.

Climate Change and Other Issues

Europeans have been involved with Pacific Islanders for more than two centuries, trading, colonising, Christianising and shaping the now mostly independent Pacific Islands countries. PISUKI maintains that Britain has an obligation to support Pacific peoples through the difficulties facing their small developing countries. Chief among these is climate change. 2009 was designated as *The Pacific Year of Climate Change*, by the Secretariat of the

Pacific Regional Environment programme. PISUKI has been active in bringing this to the attention of government ministers. Events in 2010 included a meeting with Meg Munn MP, at the Houses of Parliament, when she spoke of her recent visit to the Pacific and Britain's attitude towards the problems of climate change. We also hosted Katja Göbel, from the German Pacific Network, who spoke about climate change at our Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Activities

The Society's main social event is a Pacific Day, held each year, bringing members together for a social gathering with Pacific Islands entertainment. There is also an Annual General Meeting and election of the governing Council, held in May, which culminates in a Pacific-style social evening. Other events, with films and interesting speakers, are held during the year, in London and elsewhere. These are organized through the Society's Council and regional Area Representatives. The Society publishes a yearly magazine, *The Outrigger*, as well as the more frequent *PISUKI Report*, to keep members in touch with its own activities and with events in the Pacific Islands.

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The West Papua Network (WPN), Germany

The network is a forum of organizations and individuals in Germany concerned with the political, social, cultural and religious situation in West Papua. There is no fixed membership-structure. The network is engaged in human rights, in solidarity and environmental issues, with lobbying groups, partnership groups, congregations and other organizations of the Protestant and Catholic churches. The network produces a quarterly newsletter, regular electronic newsletters and organizes a seminar every year.

- **Aims:**

- to inform people about West Papua
- to create awareness of its political, social and cultural problems
- to strengthen competences through mutual exchange
- to act as advocates and support the members of the network
- to concentrate resources and powers for joined-up actions

- **Campaigns:**

- The West Papua Network (WPN) supports campaigns that promote human rights in West-Papua and accuse those responsible for human rights violations. It
- spreads reports about human rights violations
- has regular contacts with the Federal Government's Representative for human rights and humanitarian aid
- proposes activities like sending letters and collecting signatures, especially on request of partners in West Papua
- supports the activities of Amnesty International or other partners
- supports campaigns against logging in West Papuan and Indonesian rain forests, especially against illegal logging
- collects information about destruction of rain forests in West Papua through illegal and legal logging
- supports campaigns to create awareness of illegal logging in German property markets where furniture made of tropical wood is sold

Contact

West Papua Network
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The World Council of Churches, Switzerland

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a worldwide fellowship of 349 global, regional and sub-regional, national and local churches seeking unity, a common witness and Christian service. It is a Christian ecumenical organization that is based in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. The fellowship includes denominations collectively representing a Christian population of some 590 million people in nearly 150 countries in all regions of the world, over 520,000 local congregations served by some 493,000 pastors and priests, in addition to elders, teachers, members of parish councils and others throughout more than 120 countries.

There are currently 17 member churches from the Pacific island states and the WCC works closely with its members on issues affecting the churches, communities and people in the Pacific such as climate change, migration and economic justice.

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