

Peacebuilding Commission

Ambassadorial-level meeting on the impact of climate change on peacebuilding in the Pacific Islands

31 May 2022, 4 - 6 PM

Concept Note

Background

Pacific leaders, through the 2018 [*Boe Declaration*](#), have recognised climate change as the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the Pacific. Critical climate security risks that Pacific small island developing states face include: impacts on human mobility, including displacement; potential for social tension linked to natural resource access and use; threats to food and water security, human health and productivity; and threats to territorial integrity and maritime boundaries due to sea-level rise. However, more needs to be done to understand and map how climate change interacts with the drivers and dynamics of potential insecurities and conflicts in the region. The impacts of climate change are compounded by the profound socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and resulting disruptions to human health, social systems and economies, with women often disproportionately affected.

Working in synergy with all relevant parts of the United Nations system, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is committed to reinforcing partnerships to leverage existing capacities to address climate security-related challenges in the Pacific Islands and keeping the issue high on the agenda of the international community. During its last meeting on the Pacific Islands, which took place in July 2020, the Commission acknowledged that responses to peacebuilding and climate security-related challenges should be nationally owned and driven, while at the same time, stressing the important role of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and other regional fora and committing to supporting their efforts. Since that engagement, the United Nations system has continued to adapt its support for national peacebuilding efforts in the Pacific, including efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change in ongoing processes of dialogue and resilience building.

For example, since 2020, a regional Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) project led by UNDP and IOM has been supporting national authorities and local communities in the three Atoll nations (Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu), to engage in broad based consultations and dialogues, identify critical climate security risks and develop targeted responses. The project is also supporting regional responses, networks and advocacy led by the Pacific Islands Forum, contributing to enhanced understanding of the region's climate security challenges at community, regional and international levels. PBF's continuing support in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands is also increasingly responsive to climate security challenges. In addition, DPPA, as part of the 'Futuring Peace' initiative, developed a cinematic 360° virtual reality experience, Sea of Islands, which invites viewers to visit Pacific Islands already facing the impact of the climate crisis and meet local communities sharing their inspirational stories of resilience. Funding support for the production of Sea of Islands was provided by the Government of Japan. The UN is also increasingly focusing on helping to address the specific needs and experiences of women, including young women, when analysing the range of critical climate

security risks emerging in the Pacific region. The objective is to continue feeding new findings into the Pacific Gender and Climate Change toolkit that was designed by the Pacific Community (SPC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP-PACC), Australian Aid, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), UNDP, and UN Women to support climate change practitioners in the Pacific islands region to integrate gender into their climate change programmes and projects.

Purpose of the meeting

Building on previous PBC engagements on peacebuilding in the Pacific, and following a screening of *Sea of Islands*, the meeting will analyse the implications of climate change for peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Pacific. It will focus on national and regional efforts that require further support to address critical gaps and mitigate the risks that climate change poses to stability and human security in the region.

Guiding questions

1. How is climate change affecting the environment for peacebuilding in the Pacific region. What are the peacebuilding priorities in the Pacific that require attention in view of the climate crisis and its potential socioeconomic implications?
2. What international support is required to assist countries in the Pacific to mitigate the impact of climate change on peacebuilding gains, and support peace and sustainable development in the region?
3. How can conflict- and gender sensitive responses to climate change, led by governments and affected communities, be supported by the UN system and international partners, including international financial institutions, regional and sub-regional organizations, and including civil society?

Speakers

- Opening remarks by **H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima**, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
- Remarks by **H.E. Mr. Satyendra Prasad**, Permanent Representative of Fiji and Chair of the Pacific Island Forum

Screening of Sea of Islands [13 mins]. Participants will be provided with virtual reality headsets.

- Remarks by **Ms. Kanni Wignaraja**, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific, UNDP
- Remarks by **Ms. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner**, Climate Envoy for the Marshall Islands [via video-link]
- Remarks by **Ms. Coral Pasisi**, Senior Advisor, The Pacific Community (SPC) [via video-link]

- Remarks by **Ms. Elizabeth Spehar**, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, DPPA
- Remarks by Member States, including H.E. Mrs. Margo Reminisce Deiye, Permanent Representative of Nauru, Co-Chair of the Group of Friends on climate security
- Closing remarks by **H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima**, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission