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No Room to Fake It: The Role of Regional Organizations in Building the DRM Capacities of Pacific Island Countries

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Front Cover Photograph: "Island Nation of Kiribati Affected by Climate Change" (UN Photo, Eskinder Debebe, May 9, 2011 in Tebikenikora, Kiribati).

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ACRONYMS

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group States
AGTD	Applied Geoscience & Technology Division of the SPC (also known as the Geoscience Division)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BSRP	Building Safety and Resilience Project
COP	Conference of Parties
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CROP	Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
FSPI	The Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International
GDP	Gross domestic product
GDFRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
HAP	Humanitarian Action Plan
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IASC	Inter-agency Standing Committee
IDNDR	International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
JNAP	Joint National Action Plan for DRM and Climate Change
MIE	Multilateral Implementing Agency (for Adaptation Fund)
NAB	National Advisory Board (Vanuatu)
NACCC	National Advisory Committee of Climate Change (Vanuatu)

NAP	National Action Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NIE	National Implementing Entity (for Adaptation Fund)
NTF	National Task Force (Vanuatu)
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)
PACC	Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Programme
PCCFAF	Pacific Climate Change Finance Assessment Framework
PCRAFI	Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative
PDN	Pacific Disaster Net
PHT	Pacific Humanitarian Team
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PITs	Pacific Island Territories
PIFACC	Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRRP	Pacific Risk Resilience Programme
RFA	Regional Framework for Action (Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action)
RIE	Regional Implementing Entity (for Adaptation Fund)
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOPAC	Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission
SPC	Secretariat for the Pacific Community

SRDP	Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TAF	The Asia Foundation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDRO	United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (now OCHA)
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
USP	University of the South Pacific
VHT	Vanuatu Humanitarian Team

INTRODUCTION

Regional organizations in the Pacific play a central role in supporting the disaster risk management (DRM) activities of their nation state and territory members. While much is made of the emergent role of regional organizations in building DRM national capacities in other parts of the world, this is not a new issue in the Pacific. For decades, and particularly since the launch of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)[1] in the early 1990s, Pacific regional organizations have been engaged in helping states to minimize the human and economic losses incurred by natural disasters.

One of the first things to note about DRM action in the Pacific is how symbiotic the relationship is between regional organizations and Pacific Islands countries (PICs).[2] In some instances, regional and/or multilateral organizations spearhead initiatives that lead to Pacific-wide strategies on disaster-related issues; in other instances, it is a single nation that may develop a country-specific way of working that is then adopted by other countries and supported more broadly by regional partners. The community of practitioners in the Pacific is relatively small, and informal networks of people across governments and institutions are a major driver of the regional DRM agenda. In fact, so interdependent is the relationship between actors in the Pacific that one observer noted, "Sometimes it is hard to know where regional action ends and national activity begins."[3]

The second thing to remark is how relatively non-politicized DRM is in the Pacific. Compared to other parts of the world, the relationship between regional organizations and states around issues of DRM seem nearly devoid of negative politics. PICs are acutely vulnerable to the adverse effects of natural disasters and climate change and have very few resources – human or monetary – to combat physical hazards and to build sustainable resilience on their own. Therefore, they would seem to accept and genuinely embrace the DRM support of regional organizations and networks, allowing these institutions to act as "de facto" gatekeepers in dealing with the rest of the world. Some might even argue that PICs rely on regional support too much, employing it not just to build their national capacities, but to supplement them over the long-term.

For their part, regional organizations would seem to truly endeavor to serve their member states, continually trying to remain useful and relevant to them. While they are certainly interested in their own institutional survival, regional organizations seem deeply aware of the capacity constraints of PICs and seek to support them as best they can. Given these positive elements, there is no question that the DRM activities of regional organizations in the Pacific have had a constructive impact. Without the assistance of regional organizations in managing the myriad aspects of DRM, it would be impossible for PICs to go it alone.

Still, the challenges of DRM in the Pacific are growing all of the time, and the situation remains

[1] For a summary of IDNDR outcomes, see UN, *Proceedings: IDNDR Programme Forum, 5-9 July 1999, Geneva,* 1999, http://www.unisdr.org/files/31468_programmeforumproceedings.pdf

[2] Pacific Island countries are sovereign states; Pacific Island territories (PITs) are dependent territories. As such, PICs and PITs have access to different levels of support for capacity building and disaster response. This study will focus primarily on PICs although regional organizations also provide support to PITs.

[3] Key informant interview, November 2014.

far from perfect. While there has been a plethora of regional strategies and initiatives to assist PICs over the span of more than three decades, it is far from clear whether these activities have resulted in the existence of strengthening disaster capabilities on the ground. Critics point out that the project-style approach to DRM has resulted in an overall lack of coordination and widespread inefficiencies in building lasting best practice. Still others point out that national DRM progress may have slowed – or even reversed - in recent years with little to no DRM investment being made by national governments[4] and by exceedingly limited absorption capacities at national levels.[5] Samoa and the Cook Islands are often referenced as the only Pacific Island countries with true national DRM capabilities, and even these countries face severe human and financial constraints. Pacific Island countries are largely viewed to be underperforming against DRM benchmarks, such as the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), making it unclear to what extent regional support in this area has had a measurable impact.

On the one hand, international stakeholders are encouraged by the development of integrated DRM and climate change polices and institutional structures by PICs, raising the political profile of DRM both within and across governments in the Pacific. Furthermore, the handling of recent disasters by PICs, such as Cyclone Evan in Fiji and Samoa in 2012, has demonstrated an improvement in national coordination systems and leadership capabilities.[6] On the other hand, observers are frustrated with the slow pace of sustainable progress on DRM and with the disjointed nature of different short-term, project-based efforts. Moreover, they are concerned that repeated DRM trainings are not resulting in improved practices on the ground. There is apprehension that much of the DRM activity is little more than 'window dressing,' a worry that is well-justified in a region where the very survival of countries is contingent on their ability to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate disaster and climate change risks. In short, there is simply no room to fake it in the Pacific.

It is the purpose of this study to examine the effectiveness of DRM capacity building efforts of regional organizations in the Pacific with a view to comparing the actions of Pacific regional organizations with those acting in Southeast Asia and South Asia.

This study is a follow-up effort to a more general analysis about the work of regional organizations in DRM globally called *In the Neighborhood: The Role of Regional Organizations in Disaster Risk Management* that was published by Brookings Institution in 2013. It is the hope that a more detailed examination of the relationship of regional organizations with member states, and with national disaster management organizations (NDMOs) in particular, can offer greater insight into what regional activities are useful to national governments and why.

Of particular note for this paper will be the work of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) given its critical role in providing technical expertise in disaster risk reduction (DRR) to

[4] Unless in partnership with regional, multilateral, Red Cross and NGO actors. Key informant interview, November 2014.
[5] Key informant interviews, November 2014.
[6] However, even in this instance, there are some who argue that Samoa, in particular, should have asked for more outside help rather than trying to manage the disaster on its own. The country was apparently emboldened to manage the disaster on its own following its successful leadership of the 2009 Samoa earthquake disaster response even though many observers believe that the country could have used some of the extensive international help that it was offered. Key informant interview, November 2014.

PICs for years. The study will also analyze the roles of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), both of which play key roles in climate change adaptation, financing, and advocacy. Finally, the report will look at the work of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) and the FRANZ Agreement among other multilateral-led regional networks. The PHT and the FRANZ Agreement are currently the only international humanitarian coordination mechanism in the Pacific available to support nation states in disaster response.

It is important to mention from the outset that this study is being conducted at a time of major change to the regional strategic direction in the Pacific. The terms of the two Pacific regional policies addressing DRM and climate change, the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005 – 2015 (commonly referred to as the 'Regional Framework for Action' or RFA) and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006 - 2015(PIFACC) respectively, end in 2015. The current terms of the Millennium Development Goals and the HFA end at the same time. To succeed existing regional strategies, Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) are developing an integrated regional DRM and climate change policy to facilitate linkages between DRM, climate change and development. The new framework is called the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP) and will be presented to Pacific leaders for approval in 2015.

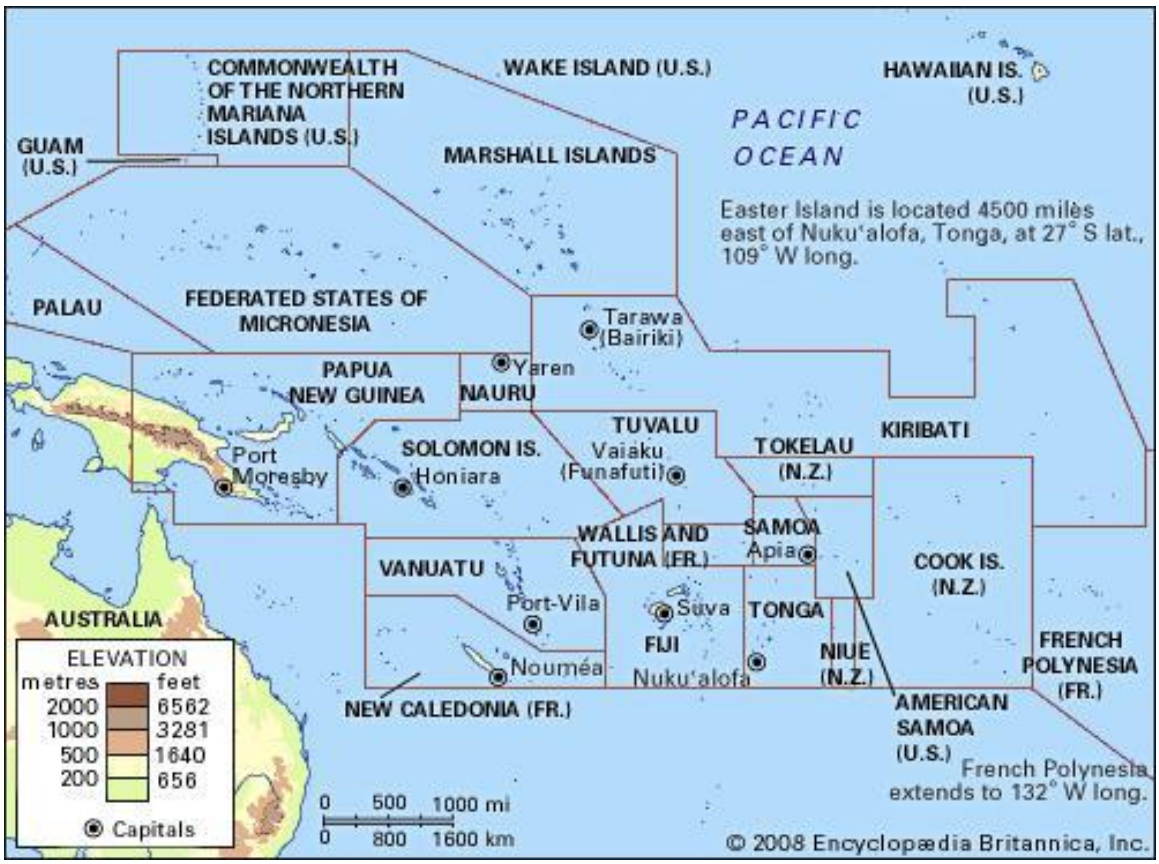
As noted above, the research on regional organizations in the Pacific is part of a larger comparative study being conducted by Brookings that includes similar research in Southeast Asia (ASEAN) and South Asia (SAARC).[7] The research methodology utilized to produce this paper included a thorough desk review of existing literature on DRM and climate change in the Pacific, a two-week field research mission to the Pacific Islands region (Fiji and Vanuatu), and key informant interviews with some 22 regional experts including staff from SPC, PIFS, SPREP, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the European Union (EU), the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT) as well as government officials from Fiji. Unfortunately, scheduled meetings with government officials from Vanuatu had to be cancelled when the necessary face-to-face government discussions were not authorized. Still, it was possible to talk with members of a coalition of humanitarian organizations that work closely with the NDMO and with other regional stakeholders familiar with Vanuatu's DRM capabilities in order to complete the case study.

[7] The Brookings Institution study on South Asia will be available later in 2015. The Southeast Asia analysis has been completed and is referenced as follows: Daniel Petz, *Strengthening Regional and National Capacity for Disaster Risk Management: The Case of ASEAN*, Brookings Institution, http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2014/11/05-south-east-asia-disasters-petz.

REGIONAL NATURAL HAZARDS

The Pacific Islands region is a very unique part of the world. It is located in a vast ocean and comprises some 20,000 to 30,000 islands. These islands are grouped into three categories: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The islands are also classified according to two types: "high islands" or volcanic islands and "low islands" or reefs and atolls. The Pacific Islands region is also distinctive in its utter remoteness. Over 90 percent of the region is ocean with many geographically splintered nation states, physical realities that present significant communications and logistical challenges. The total population of the Pacific Islands region, including Australia and New Zealand, is over 37 million. Excluding Australia and New Zealand, the population is approximately 10 million. Papua New Guinea (PNG) is by far the largest country in the region with a national population of over 5 million people.

Figure 1: Map of the Pacific Islands region



Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2008

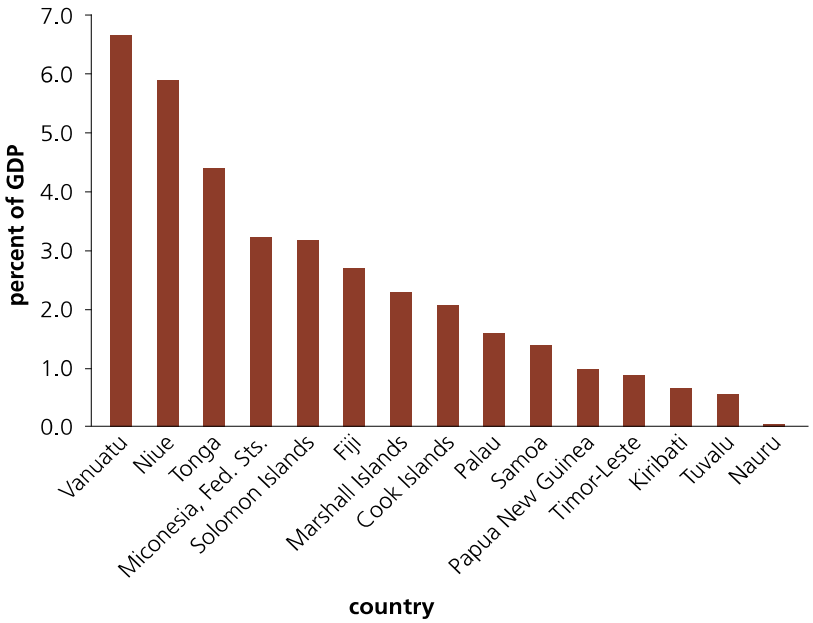
Due to their specific geographical location and characteristics as small island developing states (SIDS),[8] PICs are highly vulnerable to weather and climate-related hazards. Sea level rise in the Pacific Ocean is expected to be similar or slightly above global projections for both low and high

[8]For more about SIDS, see the website of the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States at: http://unohrlls.org/about-sids/

emissions scenarios. With sea level rise will come more frequent and more intense extreme weather events, among other negative climate change-related outcomes. PICTs are also located along 'the ring of fire,' a 25,000-mile horseshoe of tectonic plate subductions in the Pacific. Due to all of the tectonic movement along the ring, the area produces a large number of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions as well as tsunamis. Finally, PICs are located in between the Intertropical and South Pacific Convergence Zones, both of which are highly influenced by the El Niño Southern Oscillation . During the periods of drought associated with El Niño events, tropical cyclones form over a more expansive area of ocean, increasing their intensity before they reach western Pacific Islands. Together, all of these factors create a situation of high exposure to hydro-meteorological and geological hazards for countries in the region.

Since 1950, it is reported that extreme weather events have affected some 9.2 million people in the Pacific. In addition, these events have caused 9,811 reported deaths and damage of around USD 3.2 billion. Tropical cyclones have been the major cause of loss and damage followed by earthquakes and tsunamis. Of the 20 countries in the world with the highest average annual disaster losses scaled by gross domestic product (GDP) today, eight are Pacific Island countries: Vanuatu, Niue, Tonga, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Solomon Islands, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, and the Cook Islands.

Figure 2: Economic losses due to tropical cyclones, earthquakes, and tsunami in the Pacific Islands region



Source: GFDRR, Acting Today for Tomorrow, p. 7.

In the Pacific region, vulnerability is intensified by population growth and migration to urban areas as well as by poorly planned socioeconomic development. According to the World Bank, risk in the Pacific is also exacerbated by the low capacity of PICs to manage its impacts. Many PICs are very small and even relatively minor disaster events can quickly overwhelm communities and have lasting economic impacts. Their weak ability to manage risks at the

national level negates development progress and results in increasing costs for governments.[9]

Although PICs share many common risks, it would be wrong to depict these countries' overall characteristics and relative vulnerabilities as completely homogeneous. For one, PICs reflect a range of sizes and populations. Papua New Guinea (PNG) spans over 462 square kilometers and has a population of some five million people (more than all other PICTs combined) whereas Nauru is only 21 square kilometers and has just 12,000 citizens.[10] Some PICs are more prone to cyclones and flooding while others carry higher risk for earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Larger Pacific Island countries have more complex governance structures with multiple subnational levels whereas smaller countries have very flat governance arrangements and territories have a variety of governance structures.

[9] Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). *Acting Today for Tomorrow: A Policy and Practice Note for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific Islands Region*, World Bank, June 2012, http://www.gfdrr.org/sites/gfdrr.org/files/Acting_Today_for_Tomorrow_June2012.pdf.
[10] As found on the SPC pocket summary, http://www.spc.int/sdd/index.php/en/downloads/doc_download/737-2013-pocket-statistical-summary.

REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE AND INTERVENTIONS

In light of the region's acute vulnerability to disaster risk and climate change, PICs have worked together for decades to better understand, to mitigate, and to prepare for potential hazards. Currently, there is a strong push across the regional architecture to better integrate DRM and climate change initiatives. The motivation for mainstreaming these areas of intervention is driven by a need to minimize inefficiencies, lower transaction costs, and encourage greater involvement of key ministries, such as finance and planning, in budgeting for disaster-proof development. It is also obviously propelled by governments seeking to access a potentially larger pot of money for climate change that can also be used for disaster risk management.[11]

Epi Island in Vanuatu plans to relocate parts of their roads to avoid the impacts of climate change under the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change project (SPREP, March 2012).

The integration of disaster risk management and climate change policies into the new SRDP framework[12] is of particular interest for this study as it is the first combined regional strategy of its kind in the world and may lead to important changes in the traditional rationalization of responsibilities among both regional organizations and within governments. The regional development of the SRDP is also unique as it was developed in a "bottom up" manner, driven by the independent actions of several governments to integrate DRM and climate change in Joint National Action Plans (JNAPs) and then replicated by regional actors.[13] At the time of writing, the architecture for greater integration of DRM and climate change at the regional level was still evolving, and it was not yet entirely certain how implementation of the SRDP would be organized. Skeptics of the transformational nature of the SRDP were quick to note that most JNAPs developed in the region were never funded or implemented and, indeed, plans for SRDP implementation are unclear.

Below is a short description of the main inter-governmental regional players engaged in DRM and climate change and the overall focus of their activities. A more detailed summary of capacity-building efforts of the main regional and international organizations active in the Pacific can be found in Annex 1.

[11] Some argue that the mainstreaming of DRM across government was the *raison d'etre* of the HFA and that the current regional focus on merging climate change and disaster risk management is only further evidence that PICs in no way fulfilled their HFA priorities under the previous framework.
[12] The latest SRDP draft is found on the Pacific Disaster Net portal: http://www.pacificdisaster.net/dox/1Main_SRDP_Post_TWG_1510_Clean.pdf.
[13] However, it is critical to note that many of the JNAPs that were produced were never financed or implemented. For that reason, some donors justifiably worry about the implementation of the SRDP.

Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP)

Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP)	
Founded: 1988	**Headquarters**: No secretariat; Permanent Chair is PIFS Secretary-General.
Member Organizations (9): PASO, PIPD, PIFFA, PIFS, PPA, SPC, SPREP, SPTO, USP	
Website: None	
Annual budget: N/A. Not an operational agency but a network of agencies.	**Number of staff:** N/A. Permanent Chairman is PIFS Secretary-General.
Primary custodian of which regional document(s): CROP Mandate + the former Pacific Plan, now the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.	

To assist in streamlining the actions of the various Pacific regional institutions, the Pacific Island Forum Leaders established the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) in 1988. The CROP network is designed to improve the cooperation, coordination, and collaboration between Pacific inter-governmental regional organizations with the common goal of "promoting sustainable development and alleviating poverty for the people of the Pacific."[14]

CROP comprises the Executives of the following nine inter-governmental regional organizations of the Pacific:

- Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO)
- Pacific Islands Development Programme (PIPD)
- Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (PIFFA)
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
- Pacific Power Association (PPA)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
- South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO)
- University of the South Pacific (USP)

The Secretary General of PIFS is the permanent chair of CROP as mandated by Pacific Island Forum Leaders in 1995 and reaffirmed in 2004. CROP provides: (i) high-level policy advice to Leaders and Members to facilitate policy formulation at national, regional and international levels; and (ii) a mechanism between the Executives of Pacific regional organizations to coordinate action and review progress of their agencies' implementation of the Pacific Plan (the overarching regional framework for achieving the Forum Leaders' vision) and other regional frameworks.[15]

The Pacific Plan, mentioned above, is the "'master strategy'" for advancing regional integration and cooperation. It was initially endorsed in 2005 and has now been succeeded by the new

[14] CROP, *The CROP Charter*, PIFS, http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/CROP_Charter_2012.pdf .
[15] Ibid.

Framework for Pacific Regionalism. After conducting a thorough review of the efficacy of the Pacific Plan[16], it was found that the plan had had minimal impact on development in the region, mainly because it comprised too many priorities – 37 in total – making it difficult for Leaders to focus on key issues. In fact, the Pacific Plan had so many priorities and was so broadly framed, that it was viewed to effectively have had no priorities at all.[17] The new Framework, endorsed by CROP Leaders at their annual forum in June 2014, sets a clearer strategic direction and establishes a process for prioritizing a smaller number of regional priorities (it is suggested that this will not be over five at any given time). Resilience goals, including DRM and climate change, are to feature among them.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	
Founded: 1971	**Headquarters**: Suva
Member States (16): Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji[18], Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	
Website: http://www.forumsec.org/	
Annual budget: approx. USD 12,878,211 **(2012)**[19]	**Number of staff:** under 100
Primary custodian of which regional document(s) related to DRM: formerly the Pacific Plan, now the Framework for Pacific Regionalism + the Pacific Climate Change Finance Assessment Framework (PCCFAF)	

The PIFS is the premier political body in the region. The organization includes 14 Pacific Island nations as well as Australia and New Zealand. PIFS leads and coordinates political leadership and effective resourcing in the region. It holds an annual meeting with high-level political leaders to discuss issues important to member states, partners, and other regional organizations. It is also critically involved in the management and monitoring of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. PIFS is also involved in climate change advocacy and financing.

[16] Key informant interview, November 2014.
[17] Matthew Dornan, "Pacific Plan Reviewed: What Next?" *DevPolicyBlog*, February 4, 2014, http://devpolicy.org/pacific-plan-reviewed-what-next-20130204/.
[18] Fiji is noted as a member state on the PIFS website, but its membership was suspended in 2008 after the military coup in the country in 2006. Following the democratic elections in Fiji in September 2014, PIFS extended an offer to Fiji to reinstate its membership. Fiji is currently considering the proposal.
[19] Matthew Dornan and Tess Newton Cain, *Regional Service Delivery among Small Island Developing States of the Pacific: An Assessment*, Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies, Australian National University, October 2013, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2343451. The 2013 figure was unavailable.

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme	
Founded: 1993 though existed in other forms since late 1970s.	**Headquarters**: Apia
Members (19): Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, UK, USA, Vanuatu	
Website: www.sprep.org/	
Annual budget: USD 15,932,978 (2013); USD 7,197,889 for climate change programs.[20]	**Number of staff:** under 100, 16 persons in climate change division.[21]
Primary custodian of which regional document(s)/platform(s): The Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (PIFACC) through 2015; soon to share custodianship of the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP) with SPC and other partners. SPREP also hosts the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable (to be merged now with the Platform for DRM).	

SPREP leads the overall coordination and monitoring of climate change adaptation and renewable energy activities in the region. It is also responsible for the coordinated engagement of its members in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, working with states to amplify their voices at annual Conference of Parties (COP) platforms.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Secretariat of the Pacific Community	
Founded: 1947	**Headquarters**: Noumea; Geoscience Division is in Suva.
Members (26): American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, PNG, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna, Australia, France, New Zealand, USA.	
Website: http://www.spc.int/	
Annual budget: USD 117,817,480 (2013)[22]; SOPAC Disaster Reduction Unit: approx. USD 4.5 million annually.[23]	**Number of staff: 604;** 77 in Applied Geoscience and Technology Division; 20+ in Disaster Reduction Unit.[24]

[20] SPREP, *SPREP Annual Report 2013*, August 2014, http://www.sprep.org/publications/sprep-annual-report-2013.
[21] Ibid.
[22] SPC, *2013 Annual Report*, 2014, http://www.spc.int/images/publications/en/Corporate/SPC%20annual%20report%20for%202013.pdf
[23] There are other divisions of SPC that also spend money on DRM programming within their sectors so the actual amount spent on DRM is significantly more than the 4.5 USD million annually noted here, key informant interview, November 2014.
[24] SPC, *2013 Annual Report*, 2014,

Primary custodian of which regional document(s)/platform(s): The Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action (commonly referred to as the 'Regional Framework for Action' or RFA) until 2015; soon to share custodianship of the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP) with SPREP and other partners; Pacific Platform for DRM (to be merged now with Pacific Climate Change Roundtable) + the Pacific Risk Management Partnership Network (to be replaced by the Pacific Resilience Partnership once the SRDP is approved).

The SPC is the region's principal technical and scientific organization. It is the regional organization most involved in DRM action although the way in which it has structured itself to meet the DRM needs of member states has changed over the years. Since the late 1990s, the bulk of regional DRM activities has been managed by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC). SOPAC was initially established in 1972 as a UNDP Regional Project and then, in 1990, as an independent inter-governmental agency. At the time, SOPAC "The Commission" was a CROP agency with equal footing with PIFS, SPC, and other regional agencies.

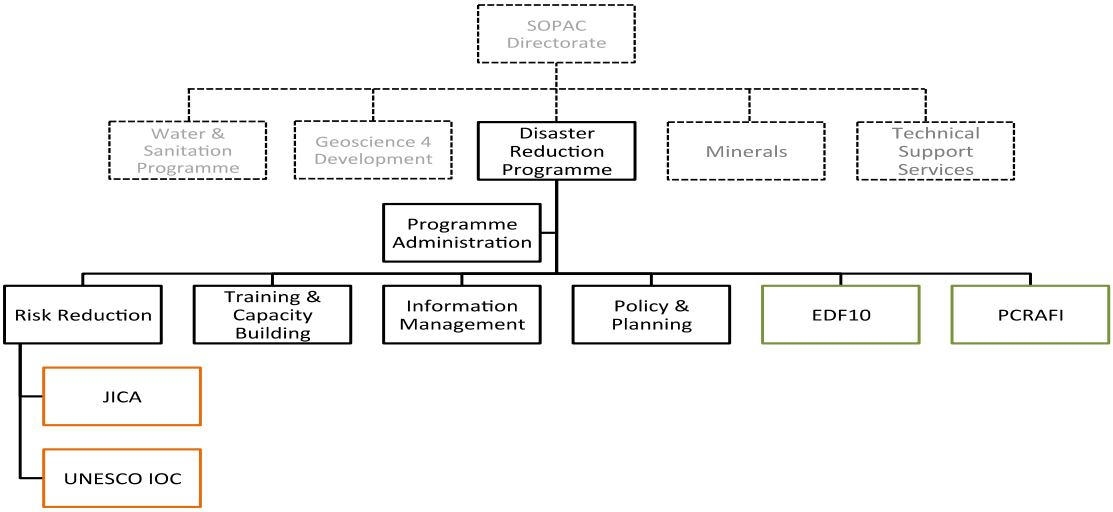
The SOPAC DRM mandate was fully established in 2000 with the creation of the Disaster Management Unit. This unit conducted hazards assessments, managed the last phase of the South Pacific Disaster Reduction Programme (formerly a UNDP/UNDRO[25] program) and established a partnership with the Asia Foundation (TAF), funded by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), to implement training courses. As of January 2011, SOPAC was integrated into the SPC and is now referred to as the Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (AGTD) of the SPC. Within AGTD, there are three technical work areas: Geoscience for Development, Water and Sanitation, and Disaster Reduction.

The Disaster Reduction program provides technical and policy advice to support and strengthen disaster risk management practices (including DRR) in PICs. The program's work focuses on disaster risk management policy, strategic planning and governance, natural hazard risk assessments, training and capacity building, and information management. It coordinates its work with that of other technical programs across SPC and with regional and international development partners and donors.

http://www.spc.int/images/publications/en/Corporate/SPC%20annual%20report%20for%202013.pdf and key informant interview, November 2014.

[25] UNDRO was the UN Disaster Relief Organization, now called OCHA.

Figure 3: SPC Applied Geoscience and Technology Division organization structure



** EDF 10 refers to EDF 10 ACP-EU/SPC BSRP 2; PCRAFI refers to PCRAFI 3.*
Source: SPC Applied Geoscience and Technology Division

Multilateral actors and other regional arrangements

While the focus of this study is on the actions of regional organizations, there are a number of key multilateral actors and other networks operating closely with regional organizations and national governments in DRM and climate change in the Pacific. Regional actors are certainly not the only or even the main players in the region with bilaterals, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), UN agencies, the World Bank and others conducting major programs in both DRM and climate change adaption (CCA). These actions are briefly described below.

The FRANZ Agreement

The FRANZ Agreement is a long-standing non-binding agreement between France, Australia and New Zealand.[26] It commits its signatories to exchange information to ensure the best use of assets and other resources for relief operations after cyclones and other natural disasters in the Pacific. The PHT cluster mechanism (described below) includes FRANZ in coordination measures during disasters, as well as Japan and the United States. Ad hoc agreements with other donor countries offering assistance have also been formed around the FRANZ Agreement.[27]

The University of the South Pacific (USP)

Under the EU-funded project *Support to the Global Climate Change Alliance through capacity building, community engagement and applied research in the Pacific* implemented by USP, a set of resilience courses including DRM has been developed. Thus far, more than 120 Pacific Islanders have graduated with Masters and/or PhDs. The project has mobilized EUR 8 million.[28]

[26] The *FRANZ Agreement* was signed in 1992.
[27] OCHA. *Disaster Response in Asia and the Pacific: A Guide to International Tools and Services,* 2011, http://www.unocha.org/publications/asiadisasterresponse/.
[28] Key informant interview, November 2014.

The Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International

The Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI) uses people-centered programs to foster self-reliance in the Pacific. Among its five signature programs is its Community Disaster Risk Management Programme that aims to works with national Network Partners to help communities not only to cope during and after a disaster, but to build a community approach to development that minimizes the impacts of natural disasters. FSPI operates in ten countries: Timor Leste, Palau, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tuvalu, Tonga, Samoa and Kiribati.[29]

The Pacific Humanitarian Team

The PHT was organized by OCHA Pacific in 2008 to ensure that regional responders work together to deliver timely and appropriate humanitarian assistance. The PHT is a network of several hundred people working across a range of development and humanitarian organizations in the Pacific. Some organizations that have done the "heavy lifting" for disaster response in the last ten years include IFRC, Red Cross National societies, the bilaterals of the FRANZ Agreement, OCHA, UNICEF, WHO, Oxfam, Save the Children, and ADRA.

The PHT operates under the co-leadership of the UN Resident Coordinators in the Pacific, based in Fiji and Samoa, and includes UN agencies, regional and bilateral organizations, national and international NGOs, and donor partners as well as government partners, in particular NDMOs. OCHA Pacific acts as the secretariat of the PHT and provides an online platform to share disaster response and preparedness information.[30] The PHT prepares for and responds to emergencies through an IASC-agreed regional Cluster Approach. Seven clusters and an Early Recovery network have been designated in the Pacific region. The PHT is generally viewed as a great success with relatively modest monetary investment. The PHT has supported a number of governments in their response and has encouraged and supported some countries (such as a Fiji and Vanuatu) to create a PHT at the national level.

United Nations Development Program

UNDP has been involved in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in the Pacific for decades. In fact, SOPAC was initially a UNDP program and only later became an independent organization. Today, UNDP is engaged in a number of DRM and climate change adaptation projects aimed at building regional resilience. The Pacific Risk Resilience Programme (PRRP), funded by the Australian government (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), is a four-year project focused on risk governance and community level risk management. The PRRP began in 2013 and reflects a USD 16 million investment. The program is active in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Further to the PRRP, UNDP implements a host of climate change adaptation projects financed through the Adaptation Fund, the Global Environment Facility and a range of donors. UNDP Pacific's current portfolio of climate change activities stands at over USD 100 million with approximately USD 20 million expended annually.[31]

[29] See the FSPI website for more information: http://www.fspi.org.fj/index.php/about.
[30] See http://www.pht.humanitarianresponse.info.
[31] Key informant interview, November 2014.

International Federation of the Red Cross
IFRC has assisted Pacific Island countries to strengthen their disaster legislation through awareness building and technical assistance according to the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance ("IDRL Guidelines").[32] IFRC, jointly with regional organizations, has also worked with PICs to identify opportunities for increased preparedness and response collaboration between Red Cross Societies and their governments.

UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)
Under the auspices of the HFA, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) has been instrumental in supporting regional action in DRR. UNISDR, together with SPC, co-convenes the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management and assists governments in the reporting of national progress on the HFA. UNISDR has also been closely involved in the development of the SRDP. Historically, UNISDR has provided funding and technical assistance for Platform meetings. It has also supported PIC participation at the Global Platform for DRR and assisted in the development of the Pacific Disaster Net (PDN).

Summary of regional activities

From these brief descriptions of regional activities (additional details in Annex 1), there is no question that the breadth of regional DRM activities over the course of the last few decades has succeeded in creating a strong enabling environment for governments to enhance their national capacities in DRM. Not only have regional organizations actively supported NDMOs through the convening of regular DRM and climate change platforms, technical assistance, training, and the development of information portals, they have also been the preferred channels for international donor funding of project-based initiatives.[33]

According to Pacific stakeholders interviewed for this study, funding for NDMOs is largely supported by regional organizations, most notably through SPC AGTD, with only nominal monies made available to these national entities through their own governments.[34] In many cases, NDMO staffing is the only major cost carried by governments with the rest of program financing coming through regional and multilateral channels.[35] What is perhaps not clear to outside observers is how all of this intensive regional support has manifested itself at national levels and influenced the agendas and capacities of PICs.

[32] For more on DRM legislation, see UNDP/IFRC, *Effective law and regulation of disaster risk reduction: a multi-country report*, June 2014, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/summary-report-final-single-page.pdf.
[33] Key informant interviews, November 2014.
[34] The role of regional organizations as custodians of donor grants is apparently encouraged by PICs. According to regional stakeholders PICs, and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group States (ACP) Secretariat requested that EU funding to the Pacific ACP countries under the auspices of the European Development Fund (EDF) be channeled through SPC, key informant interview(s), November 2014.
[35] Samoa was noted as one country that does make investments in its NDMO. Key informant interview(s), November 2014.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PICS: THE CASES OF FIJI AND VANUATU

The relationship between regional organizations and states in the Pacific is very fluid with developments occurring across a patchwork of platforms and networks, making it difficult to pinpoint the direct causal results of capacity-building efforts by various regional organizations. Still, some conclusions can be made about regional efforts through an examination of DRM national systems and activities in case study countries. This paper will present a general description of the current status of DRM action in Fiji and Vanuatu to offer a better understanding of where these countries stand with respect to DRM capabilities and with whom they have partnered to get there.

Young people celebrate UN Disaster Reduction Day on October 13, 2011 with UNISDR in Fiji (UNICEF).

Fiji

Governance and institutional structure

Fiji is a member state of SPC, PIFS, and SPREP although it should be noted that Fiji was suspended from PIFS in 2008 following the military coup in the country. PIFS recently announced that it would allow Fiji to rejoin the Forum (following democratic elections in the country in September 2014). Interestingly, however, the Fijian government has not been hasty to renew its membership and is still determining whether it will do so.[36]

With the previous separation of DRM and climate change both globally and regionally, Fiji approached these issues distinctly as well. Fiji's NDMO was supported by SPC and the Department of Environment was assisted by SPREP. Unlike other countries in the Pacific, Fiji never produced a JNAP, formally integrating DRM and climate change at the national level. With the new SRDP, however, Fiji is expected to integrate these issues in its legislation and national development strategy. In fact, in terms of operations, Fiji is already taking steps to develop a whole-of-government approach to natural disasters and climate change. Of particular note is the country's recently launched Green Growth Framework that identifies among other things the need for Fiji to establish a national SRDP as a means to link its economic development with environmental concerns.[37] Furthermore, it is reported that the Fiji NDMO will soon move to a new facility and bring in experts from the Fiji Meteorological Service, the Department of

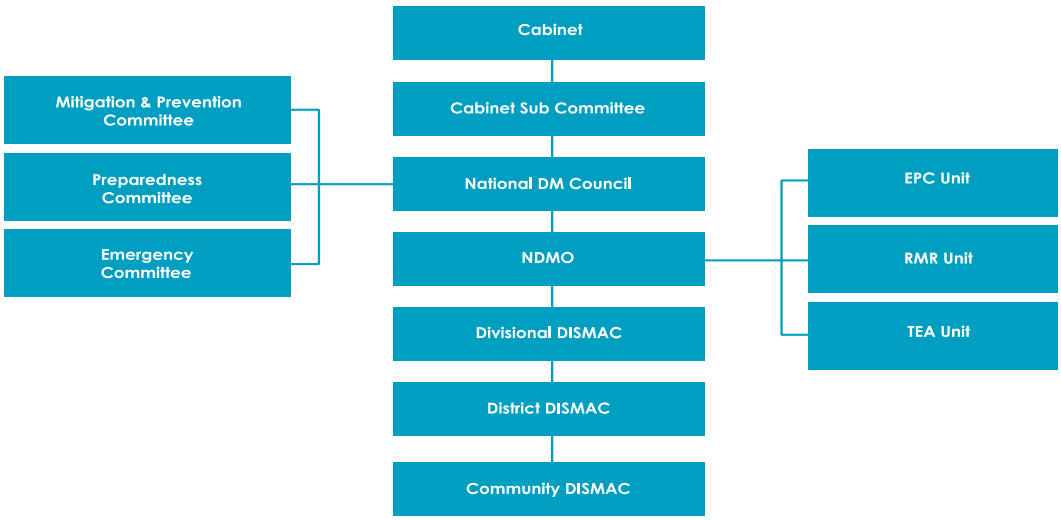
[36]Fiji has apparently stated that it will only consider rejoining PIFS if Australia and New Zealand leave the body. See Matthew Dornan and Tess Newton Cain, "Another review of the Pacific regional architecture is neither warranted or appropriate," *DevPolicyBlog*, November 11, 2014, http://devpolicy.org/another-review-of-the-pacific-regional-architecture-is-neither-warranted-nor-appropriate-20141111-2/.

[37] For more on Fiji's Green Growth Framework, see http://www.preventionweb.net/files/National-Green-Growth-Framework-for-Fiji-PIDF-Abstract_Mr-Pita-Wise.doc.

Environment, the Department of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources (seismologists).

Fiji's disaster management structure is founded on the National Disaster Management Plan of 1995 and the Natural Disaster Management Act of 1998.[38]
Overall coordination of the Plan and the Act is the responsibility of the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC). The NDMO serves the Council and sits within the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management.

Figure 4: National institutional arrangements for DRM in Fiji



Source: ISDR/UNDP/GFDRR, p. 35.

The Fiji NDMO receives its funding primarily from regional and multilateral organizations with the main support coming through SPC. That being said, heavy dependence on external funding for disaster response in recent years coupled with high rehabilitation costs has encouraged the Fiji government to establish a National Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund. Established in its current iteration in 2012, the fund now has a FJD 2 million budget (approximately USD one million) and is managed by the NDMO.[39]

DRM and CCA progress
Fiji's NDMO and Department of Environment benefit greatly from programs led and funded by regional and multilateral organizations. Fiji participates in the SPC-implemented EDF10 project, *Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific*. The Fiji government also profits from the current SPREP regional climate change adaptation program, the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project (PACC). Current SPREP activities, in partnership with the Department of Environment in particular, are focused on improving crop resilience and drainage systems in lowland farming areas.

[38] See http://www.ndmo.gov.fj/ for more information on Fiji's NDMO.
[39] Key informant interview, November 2014.

In the context of current and previous multi-country regional programs, Fiji has received ample technical assistance from SPC. In 2006, SPC (then SOPAC) assisted in reviewing Fiji's legislation around disaster-related issues. Now that the Fiji government has once again held democratic elections following the military coup, it is planned that national legislation around DRM will be reviewed in 2015 with the help of SPC. The new legislation will include natural disasters, climate change and biodiversity. SPC, jointly with UNISDR, has also been helpful in funding and providing technical assistance to facilitate national progress reviews and multi-stakeholder consultations under the auspices of the HFA. With this support, Fiji submitted a national HFA progress report for the 2009-2011 cycle. The self-assessment noted that while Fiji is making some progress, it is still lagging behind in its capacity for disaster risk reduction.

In addition to technical support, the Fiji NDMO participates in regular trainings, mostly run by SPC, to improve its hazard mapping, geographic information system (GIS) mapping, Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNA) know-how and the like. Fiji did express an interest in the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PCRAFI) pooled insurance scheme managed by SPC and the World Bank but ultimately decided not to take part. Further to the support proffered by SPC and SPREP, Fiji participates in UNDP's Pacific Risk Resilience Programme amongst other initiatives.

Cluster response to natural disasters

Another important element of Fiji's national systems to address disasters is its utilization of the Cluster Approach, mirroring the PHT at the national level. In preparation for the 2012-2013 cyclone season and with the response to Tropical Cyclone Evan at the end of 2012, the Fiji Government, with strong support from the PHT, adopted a cluster approach to coordinate relief efforts. Eight clusters were formed and led by government ministries with the support of key partners from the PHT.[40] The response to this disaster is the first time that a wide-scale activation of the cluster approach has been led by government ministries, and Fiji is reportedly one of five countries in the region with plans to develop legislation to institutionalize the cluster system at the national level.[41]

As part of its recent responses, the Government of Fiji has also adopted a Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) according to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) model to capture overall needs, ongoing response and available resources to build a basis for longer-term recovery-and-rehabilitation efforts. The HAP was introduced in Fiji for the first time during the Fiji floods in January and March 2012.[42]

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[40] From 2009 to 2012, the PHT provided strong support to the Fiji NDMO in response to cyclones and floods. Once the Fiji government agreed that a national level cluster approach was the way forward, OCHA provided a disaster management advisor to Fiji's NDMO through RedR for six months. At the end of 2012, OCHA held a workshop wherein the structure of the national system was agreed. When Cyclone Evan hit, the structure was rapidly established and operationalized, key informant interview, November 2014.

[41] Also Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Samoa, key informant interview, November 2014. See also Kristel Griffiths. *Pacific Humanitarian Team Performance Review 2008-2012,* OCHA Pacific, February 2013, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Pacific%20Humanitarian%20Team%20Performance%20Review%202008-2012.pdf.

[42] Kristel Griffiths, *Pacific Humanitarian Team Performance Review 2008-2012,* OCHA Pacific, February 2013, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Pacific%20Humanitarian%20Team%20Performance%20Review%202008-2012.pdf.

Vanuatu

Governance and institutional structure

Vanuatu is member of all the main regional organizations in the Pacific and is widely viewed to have made positive institutional changes for improved DRM. As with all PICs, the Vanuatu government is constrained by lack of financial and human resources. All government entities engaged in DRM and CCA reportedly depend on donor assistance to fund on-going activities at all levels.[43]

The legislative and institutional framework for DRM in Vanuatu is based on the National Disaster Act of 2000. Vanuatu has also created a National Action Plan (NAP) for DRM with a timeframe from 2006-2016 although it is apparently not funded.[44] DRM laws and policies are implemented by several agencies, including the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department , the Agriculture Department, the National Advisory Committee of Climate Change , and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. Disaster risk management was previously under the Ministry of Internal Affairs but now sits with the newly established Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology, Geo-Hazards, Environment, Energy and Disaster Management. The Ministry coordinates responses between local authorities in the six provinces and the National Task Force for DRR and DRM. The NTF comprises representatives of many departments and is co-chaired by the Director of the Vanuatu Meteorological Service and the NDMO.[45] In 2012, the Vanuatu government merged the NDMO, the NTF and the NACCC in the National Advisory Board (NAB), bringing together key agencies dealing with DRM and climate change.

DRM and CCA progress

With the support of SPC, UNDP, and the World Bank, Vanuatu was the first Pacific Island country to complete both a NAP for DRM and a National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA). Vanuatu's NAPA was adopted by the government in 2007. The NAPA determines eligibility to apply for funding under the Least Developed Countries Fund managed by the Global Environment Fund. Vanuatu has also prepared a NAP Implementation Plan and a Climate Change Policy and Implementation Strategy. Both the NAP and its Implementation Plan include provisions for extending disaster risk management to the provinces. The climate change strategy provides a summary of climate change developments in Vanuatu, including future areas that the government and other stakeholders need to address.

According to an IFRC review of disaster management law in Vanuatu conducted in 2012, DRM is dealt with through regulations and policies developed in Provincial Disaster Management Plans. However, there are apparently not many examples of such regional plans available, and when they do exist, they do not provide detailed provisions for disaster preparedness and response.[46] DRM progress at provincial levels is hampered by lack of funding and human resources. Reportedly, preparedness at provincial levels has been enhanced by the expansion of

[43] Key informant interview, November 2014.
[44] IFRC, *Background Report, Law and Regulation for the Reduction of Risk from Natural Disasters in Vanuatu: A National Law Desk Survey*, September 2012, http://www.drr-law.org/resources/Vanuatu-Desk-Survey.pdf
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

FSPI into Vanuatu and by the VHT.

In addition to technical support from SPC, SPREP and others (such as IFRC) for the development of DRM policy and legislation, the Vanuatu NDMO participates in regular trainings. Vanuatu is also one of the pilot countries to take part in the PCRAFI pooled insurance scheme managed by SPC and the World Bank. Further to the support proffered by SPC and SPREP, Vanuatu participates in UNDP's PRRP.

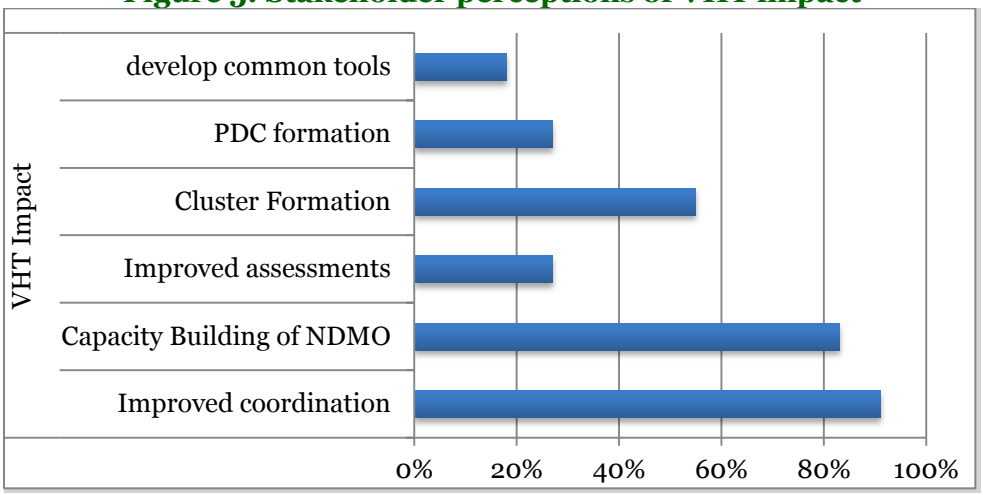
Cluster response to natural disasters

In response to a shared acknowledgement that there were shortcomings in the quality of humanitarian preparedness and response in Vanuatu following Tropical Cyclone Vania in early 2011, the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT) was established later that year. The VHT is loosely modeled on the PHT with government ministries co-leading clusters in agriculture and food security, emergency education, health, logistics and water and sanitation. The VHT brings together a network of humanitarian actors (including the Vanuatu Red Cross, French Red Cross, VANGO, UNICEF, OCHA, UN Gender Capacity building project & Protection cluster (Suva), CARE, Save the Children, ADRA, WHO, Peace Corps, World Vision and Act for Peace) to facilitate effective coordination and humanitarian action in the country. Other members of the VHT support government ministries and one of the NGO coordinators of the VHT (from Oxfam) has a seat on the National Advisory Board (NAB) and is stationed within the NDMO. The VHT is included as an integral component in the NDMO's tsunami-and-cyclone response preparedness plans, as well as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

A recent assessment of VHT performance found that national coordination and response have greatly improved as a result of the VHT and that partners have a much better understanding of how to work with the NDMO. Furthermore, with the support of the VHT, the NDMO has set up Provincial Disaster Committees () in the country's six provinces, and simulations have been run in three of them (Shefa, Torba and Tafea). However, the provincial staffers are not disaster experts, and there is a limit to how much they can do without adequate human and financial capacities. It has been recommended that the VHT find other players to build provincial DRM structures in order to ensure adequate absorptive capacity at local levels.[47]

[47] Ingvar Anda Ph.D and Hau Meni and Associates, *Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT): Program Evaluation Report*, September 2014.

Figure 5: Stakeholder perceptions of VHT impact



Source: Anda et al, p. 10

With initial funding from OCHA and EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department to Oxfam to support the establishment of the VHT (in 2011), the coordinated structure was made operational to support the NDMO. Since that time, the World Bank and UNDP have apparently provided funding for Provincial Disaster Officers () to further the VHT's efficacy. The one concern about the VHT is that it has supplemented the capacity of the Vanuatu NDMO to such an extent that it is considered to almost be part of the NDMO. Many believe that, instead, it should be focusing on the response capacity of its own members rather than spending so much effort on directly supporting the NDMO.[48]

[48] Ingvar Anda Ph.D and Hau Meni and Associates, *Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT): Program Evaluation Report*, September 2014.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of DRM Capacity Building Activities by Pacific Regional Organizations: Findings and Recommendations

Few would question the importance of DRM work in the Pacific or the genuine spirit with which regional institutions strive to build the national capacities of their member states. Still, the entire architecture for DRM in the Pacific is relatively complex with many different organizations operating across various interrelated spheres. One observer described regional frameworks as consisting of "circles within circles" with still too many duplications; given the limitations on human and financial resources, this is certainly a fair analysis.

Children in the village of Tebikenikora, on Kiribati's main Tarawa atoll (UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe, May 9, 2011).

It is hoped that the eventual adoption and implementation of the SRDP will help to focus PICs more squarely on quality initiatives that produce tangible outputs and outcomes. The challenge for regional actors will be to not get caught up in organizational processes but stay concentrated on the practical realities of disaster management and climate change risk-proofing on the ground. In the past, the differences in the mandates of SPC and SPREP meant that opportunities to build resilience on the ground in the Pacific were often missed. It is hoped that recent regional developments to streamline these important tasks of governmental responsibility will provide a more favorable environment for increased coordination and cooperation between the two organizations.[49]

It is often remarked in the region that intentions for DRM are good, but that their realization is limited by a lack of financial and human resources. There is simply not enough money or people to execute all that needs doing. Surely, the enabling environment for progress in national DRM capabilities is there; realizing progress in lasting ways has been much more difficult. For instance, although both Fiji and Vanuatu – two PICs considered to have made marked progress in their DRM arrangements – have submitted HFA national progress reports according to the global framework's timeline, outcomes are assessed as below average (mostly 2s and 3s out of four) for the five priorities.[50] Moreover, while legislative and institutional structures have been established in both countries, a disconnect remains between these national arrangements and the

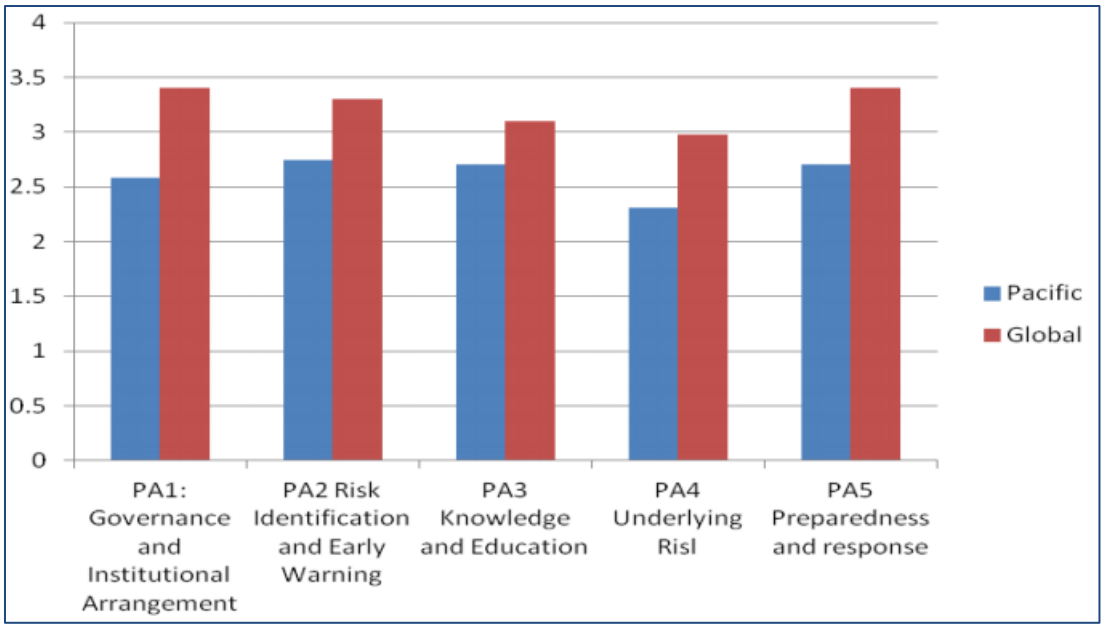
[49] Hay, John. *Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific: An Institutional and Policy Analysis*, ISDR/UNDP/GFDRR, 2012, http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/26725.

[50] See Vanuatu Government, *National progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2011-2013) – Interim*, October 2013, http://www.preventionweb.net/files/28460_vut_NationalHFAprogress_2011-13.pdf and Fiji Government, *National progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2011-2013) – Interim*, October 2013, http://www.preventionweb.net/files/28843_fji_NationalHFAprogress_2011-13.pdf.

on-the-ground capacities of subnational actors. National policy for DRM in Fiji is outdated, and the JNAP developed in Vanuatu has never been adequately funded and implemented. Finally, there are few governmental budget allocations for DRM in either country as well as very limited human resources at all levels, but especially in the provinces.

While Fiji's DRM capabilities have always been rather advanced relative to many other PICs, the situation in Vanuatu was apparently somewhat of a mess until the establishment of the VHT in 2011.[51] The Pacific Islands HFA review, for instance, notes that PICs as a group still lag behind global averages on all five of the HFA priorities. What is more, many observers believe that DRM growth in the region is stunted by out-of date practices that do not include results-based planning, solid monitoring and evaluation, or lessons learned reviews. Furthermore, according to a study of regional trainings conducted by OCHA in 2010, the main training program in the region run by SPC together with TAF and OFDA is in dire need of updating to incorporate more hands-on experiences and less classroom-based learning.[52] In brief, there should be greater focus on building experience-based expertise in the region rather than concentrating on policies and strategies only.

Figure 6: Progress of reporting PICs compared to global progress across HFA priorities



Source: ISDR/SPC/SPREP, 2012, p. 3

The description below highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of regional DRM action in the Pacific Islands region as found in this study.

[51] Apart from the Cook Islands and Samoa, PICs are described as having quite limited DRM capacities, key informant interviews, November 2014.

[52] OCHA, *Analysis of Disaster Response Training in the Pacific Island Region*, Provisional Version, September 2012. Apparently, the SPC is shortly to commence the review process and will work with OCHA, IFRC and other relevant organizations to update its current suite of training courses.

Strengths

1) Strong enabling environment for mainstreaming of DRM

Regional organizations have been very instrumental in helping to mainstream DRM within governments. Back in the 1990s, it was only disaster practitioners who talked about disasters. NDMOs worked alone and did not have a lot of financial and political support. Today, the integration of DRM and CCA at the regional level will hopefully elevate these issues within governments so that ministries of internal affairs, finance, and planning become more involved in the requisite budgeting for DRM and CCA. Regional organizations have created an enabling environment that provides clear linkages between these concepts and sustainable national development and has arguably helped NDMOs to leverage power within their own governments.

Therefore, it is anticipated that PIC governments will increasingly see the importance of risk-proofing development agendas rather than leaving NDMOs and emergency services to deal with the consequences of disasters on their own. There is evidence through the release of Fiji's Green Growth Framework, for instance, that DRM and CCA national agendas will be merged in real ways but, again, tangible progress hinges on the approval of budgets and on implementation at provincial levels, not just on the framing of national policies alone.

2) Sustained culture of service to states

Regional organizations in the Pacific have a strong influence on the ideas and strategic vision of their member states as regards DRM. Given this role, they would seem to have genuinely tried to serve their members to the best of their ability over the decades. In the spirit of continued service to states, however, regional organizations also have a duty to foster partnerships between PICs and other innovative actors in the field, something that does not always happen when funding to regional organizations is directly attached to their close relationship with PICs. As "de facto" gatekeepers for PICs, absorbing and channeling the various agendas of the outside world for the small countries that they represent, regional organizations must remain cognizant of the fact that they are the primary source of knowledge and ideas for PICs. Therefore, they and their donors have a responsibility to stay on top of their game and provide the most cutting edge services to their members or find actors that can. This means that donors in particular need to ensure that regional organizations have the technical expertise and resource capacity to augment and supplement national capacity, particularly in needed areas that are not part of the traditional skill set of regional organizations.

Weaknesses

1) Lack of real ownership

While regional organizations maintain membership fees and are staffed in large part by Pacific Islanders, they are also almost entirely funded by international development agencies, potentially weakening the sense of ownership of these institutions by PICs. In 2013, 80 percent of SPREP's budget and some 60 percent of SPC's budget came from development partners, some 73 percent of the SPC/AGTD coming from the EU.[53] Because so much money comes from development

[53] SPC, *2013 Annual Report*, 2014, http://www.spc.int/images/publications/en/Corporate/SPC%20annual%20report%20for%202013.pdf and

partners, funds are primarily project-based which has led to disjointed and non-sustainable actions over time. This reliance on external funding has also discouraged the pooling of expertise and resources by state members. According to SPC, 95 percent of the funding for the Disaster Reduction Programme in 2014 is currently project- based.[54] This means that initiatives tend to be stand-alone activities with shorter time frames and little carry over from one project to the next. While some observers note that PICs do not care where the money comes from and consider regional organizations to be "homegrown," the fact that there is no real investment in these institutions by member states themselves would have to have a negative impact on the level of effort PICs will put into the implementation of regionally-led program at the national level.

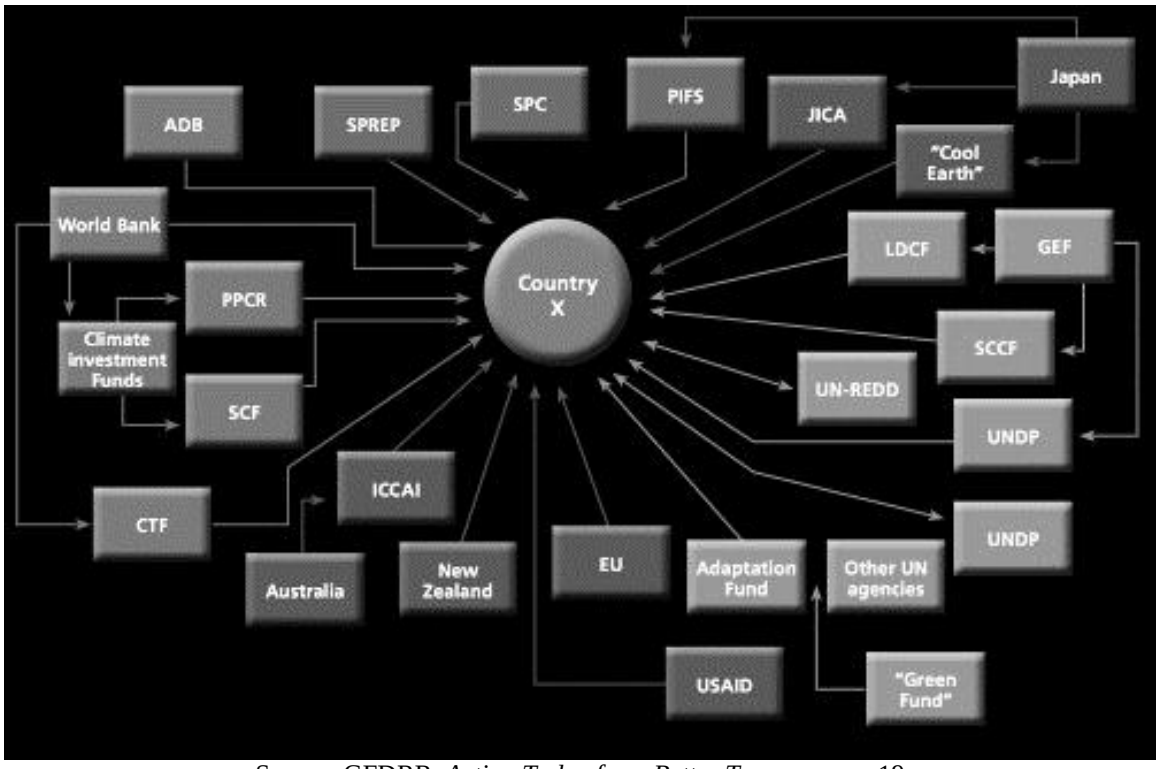
2) Lack of national absorptive capacity

PICs are severely constrained by a lack of financial and human resources. In some of the smaller countries, the NDMO may be staffed by only one or two persons. Absorptive capacities at provincial levels are even more restricted. As noted above, one of the 'de facto' roles of regional organizations is to function as gatekeepers to these small island states with limited capacities. At the same time, these organizations are more rightly regarded by member states as sources of capacity supplementation rather than capacity building. Instead of relying on regional support less and less over time, it is evident that many countries in the Pacific continue to expect significant "hands-on" support from regional organizations as they simply do not have the means to build up their capabilities to the levels required for adequate disaster self-management. If capacity supplementation is, indeed, the goal, it seems it should at the very least be stated more squarely up front and then activities could be evaluated on that basis.

In GFDRR's *Acting Today for a Better Tomorrow* paper, the multiple channels of actual and potential support that PICs must manage in the climate change sphere alone are illustrated in the below figure. For countries with limited staff capacity, managing the diversity of these relationships is a major challenge.

SPREP, *SPREP Annual Report 2013*, August 2014, http://www.sprep.org/publications/sprep-annual-report-2013
[54] Key informant interview, November 2014.

Figure 7: Complexity of climate funding and support sources to a typical Pacific Island country



Source: GFDRR, *Acting Today for a Better Tomorrow*, p. 19

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nukunonu Atoll seaside in the Pacific, one of the regions of the world, vulnerable to the impact of the climate change (UN Photo/Ariane Rummery, October 24, 2007).

PICs are some of the most at-risk countries in the world. Not only are they exposed to extreme meteorological and geo-hazards, they have a very low capacity to deal with their impacts. Given the situation, the capacity-building activities of regional organizations take on a *gravitas* in the Pacific Islands region that they may not possess in other parts of the world. The very survival of many of these countries is dependent on the most relevant and effective support that they can acquire from partners, most notably regional organizations. There is no room to fake it in the Pacific, giving regional organizations an unparalleled responsibility to function as effectively and innovatively as possible, creating tools and services that are directly targeted to the needs of end-users and, at the same time, connecting PICs directly with partners and sources of funding in instances where they do not have the requisite expertise to conduct programming themselves.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- **Regional support for DRM, including in particular technical assistance for the development of provincial budgets and operational structures mandated by from national policies, needs to be carefully coordinated and streamlined** in order to lower transaction costs for small and overstretched governments with limited absorptive capacities. The limited abilities of small PICs to handle multiple initiatives at once cannot be overstated and all institutions engaging with states need to operate in a Pacific Islands-specific manner in order not to overwhelm existing capacities.

- **Regional organizations and their member states need to acknowledge collectively that there will never be full capacity building in the Pacific and focus their efforts on innovative capacity supplementation and multi-country response plans** over the longer-term. Given existing capacities and the sheer scale of disaster events to come, one has to be realistic and acknowledge that certain events will always require a multinational and multi-agency response. While there are surely political sensitivities that would need to be addressed, PICs should specifically plan for shared responsibilities in their national policies and arrangements. A regional mechanism or operational facility where NDMOs could support each other in response would be one idea.

- **There should be greater focus on results-based programming with rigorous monitoring and evaluation, baseline data collection, and lessons learned mechanisms**. Currently, there is little evidence beyond general impressions to determine whether DRM practice on the ground has improved over the years. This needs to be

improved drastically and could start with the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework around the SRDP. Regular external and/or peer evaluations outlining the strengths and weakness of PICs' disaster response efforts should also be a consistent aspect of regional activities.

- **Regional organizations may be better positioned to invest more in their capacity to coordinate networks, including information management, research and reporting rather than on-the-ground disaster risk reduction and response**. In focusing more on coordination and information sharing, these organizations may open the market to other actors with greater grassroots DRM capacity-building experience.

- **PICs, for their part, should be encouraged to take greater strategic leadership of their DRM processes rather than relying so heavily on the direction of regional organizations and donors**. Effective DRM cannot happen without robust political leadership and accountability at national levels. Donors are perhaps too understanding of the constraints on regional and national actors in the Pacific and do not push sufficiently for real ownership and tangible outcomes in DRM. The EU, Australia, New Zealand and the US, together, could work to enhance regional expectations of nation states.

- **Regional organizations need to be encouraged to engage regularly with the most innovative practices from the global agenda** in order that they can train their members most effectively. Given how remote the Pacific Islands region is from the rest of the world, there is the worry that disaster professionals may become detached from best practices if they do not engage consistently with practitioners from other regions, particularly SIDS regions such as the Caribbean. PICs also possess extensive experience and best practice that needs to be shared with others.

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ANNEX 1: DESCRIPTION OF REGIONAL DRM AND CC ACTIVITIES

The description of activities below is not meant to be exhaustive but is included here to offer a sense of the types of interventions and current division of responsibilities that exist amongst regional organizations and networks.[55]

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)

Climate change advocacy

Together with SPREP, PIFS assists in preparing its members for global climate change negotiations under the auspices of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) and its accompanying Kyoto Protocol. In specific, PIFS organizes its members to participate in and develop a common message at the annual UNFCC Conferences of the Parties (COPs), the most recent of which was held in Lima, Peru in December 2014.

Climate change financing

Another relatively new area in which PIFS is offering key support to its member states is in the area of climate change financing. In 2010, Forum Island countries asked PIFS to help them in accessing and managing climate change resources. In response, PIFS has developed the PCCFAF as a tool for states to approach climate change financing. The Framework is designed to guide the assessment of a country's ability to access and manage climate change resources across six interrelated dimensions. A pilot assessment using the framework was conducted in Nauru in May 2013 and a more recent assessment was completed in the Marshall Islands in August 2014.

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Strategic and technical assistance

At the regional level, SPREP is responsible for coordinating regional activities in support of national initiatives and in monitoring and promoting the regional climate change policy under the auspices of the PIFACC. The PIFACC was initially produced by SPREP and endorsed by Pacific Island Forum Leaders in 2005.

The PIFACC includes six themes. Through the development of a detailed monitoring and evaluation framework for the themes of the PIFACC, SPREP was responsible for measuring the outcomes and outputs of each of the areas.[56] SPREP, jointly with SPC, was also instrumental in helping certain Pacific Island countries to develop their JNAPs.

Access to climate change funding

[55] For a still more comprehensive summary of the respective roles of all multilateral, regional and non-governmental actors engaged in DRM in the Pacific, see John Hays' *Roles of Pacific Regional Organizations in Disaster Risk Management: Questions and Answers*, Brookings Institution, July 2013, p. v. 2. http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/reports/2013/07/pacific%20regional%20organizations%20disasters/brookings_regional_orgs_pacific_july_2013.

[56] SPREP, *Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (PIFACC), Second Edition, 2006-2015*, 2005, http://www.sprep.org/climate_change/pycc/documents/PIFACC.pdf.

Further to its work under the auspices of the PIFACC, SPREP has applied for and received Regional Implementing Entity (RIE) accreditation for the Adaptation Fund. The Adaptation Fund finances projects and program to help developing countries party to the Kyoto Protocol to adapt to the negative effects of climate change. Kyoto Protocol Parties that are eligible to apply for funding must use either a national implementing entity (NIE), a regional implementing entity (RIE), or a multilateral implementing entity (MIE) to access Adaptation Fund resources. Since no countries in the Pacific have received NIE accreditation,[57] the role of SPREP as an RIE is quite useful as it can enhance the ability of PICs to access climate change adaptation funds. In fact, some countries may now rethink whether they wish to pursue NIE accreditation as they can access funds through SPREP. Presently, no Adaptation Fund awards have been made through SPREP. Instead, UNDP, as an MIE, has accessed funds for PNG, Cook Islands, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands.[58] Of note is the fact that MIEs globally have reached the 50 percent cap on Adaptation Fund awards, meaning that RIE and NIE are currently the only entities eligible to access the Adaptation Fund.[59]

Climate change adaptation

SPREP is the main implementing partner of the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Program, the first major climate change adaptation initiative in the region. PACC began in 2009 and includes the participation of 14 PICTs. The purpose of the program is to climate-proof development initiatives and to mainstream climate change into national development processes. The program is demonstrating best-practice adaptation in three key climate-sensitive areas: coastal zone management, food security and food production, and water resources management. PACC is funded by the Global Environmental Fund and administered by UNDP.[60]

Information management

SPREP has developed the Pacific Climate Change Portal[61] which seeks to ensure that all climate change-related information and tools in the region are readily accessible and coordinated in a user-friendly manner. An Advisory Committee comprised of PIFS, SPC, USP and SPREP advises on the strategic direction of the portal. Further to the portal, SPREP hosts a Regional Technical Support Mechanism which is a continually updated roster of experts from across key areas related to climate change that can be called upon to deploy to PICTs as needed.[62]

[57] Some have demonstrated interest but have not received the accreditation. Only 16 NIEs have been accredited worldwide. See https://www.adaptation-fund.org/national-implementing-entities

[58] See https://www.adaptation-fund.org/multilateral-implementing-entities for global projects implemented by MIEs.

[59] No governments in the Pacific have been accredited as NIEs although Cook Islands has demonstrated an interest in applying and FSM may apparently have accreditation soon, key informant interview, November 2014.

[60] For more information on the PACC program, see http://www.sprep.org/pacc.

[61] For more information on the Portal, see http://www.pacificclimatechange.net/.

[62] As described at http://rtsm.pacificclimatechange.net/.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Strategic and technical assistance

SPC is the main provider of technical assistance to member states on DRM issues with a particular focus on DRR. With a leadership role in DRR, SPC has been the primary actor coordinating DRM input from various stakeholders in order to form the SRDP. Further to the development of the SRDP on behalf of the CROP, SPC has also been instrumental in assisting countries to draft national strategies and policies, sometimes deploying to PICs to lend support. Of particular note has been the help that SPC offered to states in drafting NAPs for DRM and JNAPs for DRM and climate change (together with SPREP and other development partners).[63] Through the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network[64] and together with PIFS and UNDP, SPC also published a Guide to Developing DRM National Action Plans as a general tool for states in 2009.

SPC acts as the lead coordinating organization of the RFA 2005-2015. SPC developed the online RFA Monitor to facilitate reporting by member countries against national implementation of both the RFA and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015. With the technical support of SPC and UNISDR, all PIC governments with the exception of Papua New Guinea reported progress in disaster risk reduction in 2012.[65] SPC also co-convenes the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management jointly with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). The Pacific Platform was established in 2008 to harmonize existing regional mechanisms for DRM in the Pacific.

Training

Another primary area of SPC's disaster management interventions is training. In partnership with TAF and OFDA, SOPAC and then SPC has been involved in the provision of training courses for national government officials since 1995. In March 2014, SPC assumed full responsibility for DRM training as TAF scaled back its operations in the Pacific Islands region. At this time, SPC inherited the TAF suite of training courses and continues to provide them to PICs as requested. These are the only training courses in the region that have been consistently offered to PICs. There are currently eight courses on offer:

- Introduction to Disaster Management (since 1996)
- Emergency Operations Centers (since 2002)
- Initial Damage Assessment (since 2001)
- Training for Instructors (since 1995)
- Risk Programme Management (since 2007)
- Exercise Management (since 2001)
- Disaster Risk Reduction (since 2012)
- Evacuation Centre Management (since 2013)

[63] The countries that have produced JNAPs include Tonga, Cook Islands, and Tuvalu. Key informant interview, November 2014.
[64] This network replaced the former Pacific Emergency Management Training Advisory Group (PEMTAG) in 2009.
[65] Key informant interview, November 2014. See all HFA national progress reports at: http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/progress/reports/?pid:222.

In addition to the training courses, SPC has a well-developed training program in geographic information systems (GIS), offering in-country training in basic and advanced GIS for DRM as well as internships in GIS. Apart from the regular one-on-one GIS training, there are approximately 25 different training courses offered per year in the above listed subjects. Each course includes some 20 people and last between two days and one week.

Information management

Under the auspices of its information management services, SOPAC launched the Pacific Disaster Net (PDN) portal[66] in 2008. PDN is housed within SPC but is also supported by UNISDR, IFRC, UNDP and OCHA.

The PDN portal is the largest and most comprehensive resource for DRM in the Pacific Islands. It now comprises over 15,000 documents relating to everything from risk assessment to hazard mapping to early warning and monitoring systems. There are three full-time SPC staff who manage the portal, continually updating it, providing trainings on its use, and offering governmental users one-on-one technical support in accessing material. The SPC information services unit has also been instrumental in helping governments to set up their own websites.

European Development Fund (EDF)

While PIFS functions as the regional authorizing officer for EU funding in the Pacific Islands region within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group States (or ACP countries), SPC is the main custodian and primary implementer of the various cycles of the Intra ACP European Development Fund (EDF) Disaster Risk Management funding . All in all, the EU has financed approximately Euro 178 million in resilience actions in the Pacific since 2008, Euro 100 million of which has gone through regional partners with national on-the-ground results, including SPC. The current regional program, EU-ACP *Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific* (under EDF 10) implemented by SPC, reflects an investment of Euro 20 million and runs from 2013-2018. It is the successor to a previous EDF project (under EDF 9) that supported governance in DRM through technical assistance to states in developing NAP and JNAPs. SPC makes awards to PICs based on submitted proposals and manages the activities and results of these actions.

Risk modeling and pooled insurance

A relatively new area of support being managed by SPC in collaboration with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank is the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment Financing Initiative. PCRAFI aims to provide PICs with disaster risk modeling and assessment tools. It also seeks to engage in a dialogue with the PICs on integrated financial solutions for the reduction of their financial vulnerability to natural disasters and to climate change. Similar to the Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility, PCRAFI is a parametric pooled insurance scheme that offers fast money to countries for disaster response. The countries participating in the pilot scheme are Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu, and the Marshall Islands. The Solomon Islands was initially part of the pilot group but dropped out when it experienced two major events in 2013 and 2014 and did not receive a pay out because the events did not meet the necessary parameters.[67] Thus

[66] See http://www.pacificdisaster.net.

[67] Two large events in the Solomon Islands, a tsunami in February 2013 and flooding in April 2014, did not trigger an insurance payout. The level of physical damage caused by the tsunami in Feb 2013 was relatively low. The floods

far, Tonga is the only country to receive a disbursement. It was in the sum of USD 1.27 million.[68]

The advantage of PCRAFI awards is that they are generally turned around very quickly (within one week), allowing for financing of urgent relief activities. Currently, four out of the five pilot countries' premium contributions – in the sum of USD one million - are supported by Japan. The Cook Islands is the only country that pays its own premium in full. The aggregate insurance coverage (meaning the maximum payout for all claims for the period of the insurance contract) for tropical cyclones and earthquakes is USD 43 million. The actual coverage amount differs for each country.[69]

The products derived from PCRAFI are being used to develop other DRM and CCA applications. For instance, PCRAFI provides rapid impact estimations and strengthens urban planning by including disaster risk considerations. Another major benefit of PCRAFI is that it uses PacRIS, a GIS platform, to provide very detailed risk exposure information for each country. This allows for the most realistic figures and eliminates risk assumptions to the greatest extent possible.

First response coordination

Although SPC has not been involved in disaster response, leaving the lead on response to PIC governments, the UN, FRANZ, and the Red Cross which since 2008 jointly respond through the PHT, SPC has established the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance to support emergency/disaster response coordination capacity building for National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs), Fire and Emergency Services, Police and other national response agencies.[70] This work aims to enhance interoperability and cohesiveness between key response agencies in PICTs. PIEMA is a coalition involving SPC, Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council, and PIC NDMOs and Fire and Emergency Services and Police.

A strategic plan for PIEMA is still under development and there are varying views on the overall promise of the arrangement. Many believe that it has the potential to encourage strong capacity building partnerships for disaster response such as the recent establishment of a twinning relationship between Kiribati and South Australia on emergency response preparedness as well as the emergency services capacity building support provided to Tuvalu by the Australians under the auspices of PIEMA. Still others voice concern that PIEMA may end up as nothing more than another talk shop in the region, pointing out that SPC does not have experience in urban search and rescue, among other first response capabilities, and yet PIEMA has still not established a relationship with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Committee, the premier global network for first response.[71]

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in April 2014 caused extensive damages and resulted in large losses; however, the event itself was not associated with a tropical cyclone, key informant interview, November 2014.

[68] Key informant interview, November 2014.

[69] Key informant interview, November 2014.

[70] PIEMA was established in 2013 and held its first inaugural meeting in September 2014.

[71] Key informant interviews, November 2014.