

UNESCAP Regional Consultation on South-south Cooperation in the Asia and the Pacific

27 Jun to 29 Jun 2018, UNCC, Bangkok

**Session 2: Modalities to strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation
through South-south and triangular cooperation for sustainable development
[27 Jun 2018 – 13:30-15:00]**

Moderator: Dr. Rathin Roy, Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIFPP), India

Interventions of panelist: François Martel, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Development Forum

Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Please let me first position the Pacific Islands Development Forum as a new original organization in the context of South-south and triangular cooperation.

An important development in the Pacific following the 2014 SIDS Conference held in Apia, Samoa, was the creation of a new Pacific regional multi-stakeholder organization in support of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway implementation. The Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) was created by Pacific leaders of 16 countries and territories and its Charter entered into force in September 2015. Now with 14 members, PIDF is a multilateral and multi-stakeholder organization focusing on a distinctive Pacific model of green growth in blue economies aligned to sustainable development principles. The PIDF is a permanent observer to the United Nations General Assembly since December 2016, together with the Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific Community, and is an active member of the Inter-agency Collaborative Group on the Global Partnership on SIDS.

It became, the facto, a unique Pacific voice in the regional architecture, challenging the geo-political status quo established by metropolitan and colonial

power following independence of Pacific Islands around 40 to 50 years ago dominated and controlled (to this day) by Australia, New Zealand, France, the United States and the United Kingdom. The fact that this new organization born out of the post- RIO+20 reflections and the green growth concept was initiated by the Government of Fiji in 2013, a small island states from the Global South and highly engaged in its own regional cooperation with other Pacific Islands, should be celebrated and not stigmatized as it has been to this day.

PIDF is a Global South organization.



PACIFIC ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT FORUM

- **Initiated by Republic of Fiji in 2013**
- **Challenge the status-quo in regional organizations**
- **Affirm the capacity of Pacific Islands to collaborate with emerging/south economies:**
 - 1st: President of Timor-Leste**
 - 2nd: President of Indonesia**
 - 3rd: Dep. Prime Minister of Thailand**
- **First opportunity to engage in south-south cooperation**
- **Pacific SIDS and territories – unique Pacific voice**

Our foundational development partners, listed in Schedule 3 of our Charter as an international organization are only and all Global South partners. More importantly, our Charter mandates PIDF to serve as the Pacific regional counterpart and platform for the South-south cooperation with focus on sustainable development and poverty eradication.

PACIFIC ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT FORUM

- Charter mandates PIDF: to serve as the Pacific regional counterpart for the south-south - focus on sustainable development and poverty eradication
- Foundational Development Partners of PIDF are:
 - People's Republic of China,
 - Republic of Turkey,
 - State of Kuwait,
 - State of Qatar,
 - Timor-Leste and
 - United Arab Emirates.



Over the last two years, PIDF has made strong efforts to develop partnerships with Asia-Pacific and South-south international and regional organizations with the aim to assist Pacific Islands in innovation, lessons learned, best practices for technology transfer in order to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and SDGs in the Pacific.

We have now signed MOU and partnered with the following South based organizations:

- United Nations Office for South-south Cooperation (UNOSSC)
- Global Island Partnership (GLISPA)
- The Resource and Energy Institute of India (TERI)

- Commission on Science and technology for sustainable development of the South (COMSATS)
- Federation of India Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
- Centre for Integrated Rural Development in Asia-Pacific (CIRDAP)

And we continue to identify new potential partner such as the International Bamboo and Rattan Network (INBAR) based in China and The Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC) here in Thailand, among others.

PIDF – GLOBAL ISLAND PARTNERSHIP

GLOBAL ISLAND PARTNERSHIP

- **Build a Pacific roadmap for a sustainable blue economy**
- **Lessons from Indian Ocean (Seychelles), the Caribbean (Grenada) and Pacific (Palau)**
- **Development Partners for the Blue Economy Conference: China, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Pakistan, State of Qatar**
- **Outcome:**
- ✓ **New alliance and partnership for a Climate Smart Island Initiative**

SAVE THE DATES

1st HIGH LEVEL PACIFIC BLUE ECONOMY CONFERENCE
PIDF CONFERENCE: SUSTAINABLE OCEANS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

ESCAP

Date: August 13-17, 2017 **Venue: Suva, Republic of Fiji**

ESCAP

Five men in blue shirts and traditional Fijian garlands standing together.

Comparative advantages of South-south cooperation

This brings us to the main comparative advantages of South-south cooperation, as we were challenged by the Special Envoy in this morning session to raise them – and in my view they are three main ones:

- The belonging to the tropical ecosystem and natural resource global belt – so expertise and experience is directly related to Pacific environmental conditions;
- Rural socio-economic and cultural conditions remain at the core of the development paradigm – village communities remain the most important group of stakeholders needing to be reached by the SDGs;
- Largest island archipelagos countries on the planet are from the Global South and closest to the Pacific Islands, including Indonesia, the Philippines and the island archipelagos of India and the Indian Ocean – bringing island-relevant contexts expertise and best practices.

Intervention on the Main Points raised by UNESCAP members on the role of regional organizations in the south-south context and how to address key issues raised, starting with the question from the moderator on the gap existing between recipients and donors from the south:

- (1) There exists a large **knowledge gap** in the Pacific Islands regarding the comparative advantages and the expertise and funding available from the Global south partners and the Pacific Islands – here regional organizations like the PIDF could assist in bridging that gap. I used the example of Conservation International trying to engage with the Government of France some years ago in funding the organization and how a single day meeting to share on our visions, missions, geographic and thematic priorities, location of in-country offices completely changed the picture and France become within a few years the largest bilateral donor for the organization, as during that day we identified common issues, geographical and thematic synergies that provided for win-win in terms of impact in conservation outcomes. We need to force the identification of synergies between the expertise of Global south partners and the needs of Pacific Islands by increasing the exchanges forum and seminars in the region where partners can meet and learn from each other.
- (2) Regional like **PIDF can facilitate the needs assessments, the gap analysis and can be used as the capacity-building and match making platforms between Global south agencies and their Pacific Islands friends**, as they do not have that capacity in the ground – no or very limited diplomatic

representation, ad-hoc selection of island countries and projects to engage with and a limited regional visibility, which is important for the UN-PSIDS group at the UN General Assembly.

- (3) **Visibility of the Global south development assistance to the Pacific Islands is a major issue** – here I gave the example of my invitation to a COP22 side-event by the Government of Estonia on their assistance to the Pacific Islands on renewable energy projects – as their financial assistance had more impact as a small donor on small states like Pacific Islands – but no one in the Pacific had heard of Estonia’s role – because their funding was channeled through the EU. The same applied to the draft report on the Pacific Mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway, where the table describing the development partners funding allocation only included traditional donors funding, Australia, the EU, New Zealand, Japan and the United States, together with World Bank and ADB – but not a single mention of the substantial global south donors like China, Indonesia, Thailand, India and others that accounts in the millions – no recognition at all, not even the inclusion of the funding contributed by the Pacific Islands countries themselves in terms of disaster relief contributions to each other or even their co-financing contributions. This needs to change.
- (4) One of the main comparative advantage should also be to move away from what I call the “curse of the 3-5 year project cycle from traditional donors and multilateral donors – with the dream of sustainability in the end and no guarantee of continued implementation. **Long-term programming** and support should be the hallmark of South-south cooperation so we move away from political expediency.
- (5) The importance of **engagement of all stakeholders in the process** – PIDF is a multi-stakeholder organization – with the Pacific islands umbrella organizations for Civil Society and the Private Sector as full member on the Leaders’ councils, together with leader of Pacific territories as equal in decision-making with Pacific countries Presidents and Prime Ministers – one of the rare multi-stakeholder inter-governmental organization permanent observer to the United Nations. We should avoid focusing too much also on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and focus instead on Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (MSP) in line with the vision of the High Level

Political Forum at the United Nations. Civil Society has much to teach governments in engaging with rural and grass-root communities where the SDG goals will be achieved.

- (6) Partnerships between Global south and Pacific Islands could be enhanced by working together on developing funding proposal for multi-lateral donor programme including but not limited to GCF, GEF, ADB, World Bank and in some cases bilateral donor initiatives, ie. GIZ, EDF (EU). AfD.
- (7) Finally on the issue of **duplication of development assistance**: let me quote the former President of the General Assembly HE Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji, and Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Ocean, while addressing members at the UN Global Conference on Oceans “ duplication- for the all work needed and the urgency on saving the oceans - is welcome, the more the better as far as I am concerned. It is the cumulative results that are critically important and the more engagement on the mission the better”.

François Martel
Secretary General
Pacific Islands Development Forum
27 June 2018, Bangkok