PIANGO REFLECTION

6th Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (PFSD) 6 – 7 December 2022
Reflections on SDGs in the Pacific amidst the Covid 19 pandemic, and pathways towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels and achieving the 2050 Strategy.

The Pacific Island Association of Non-governmental Organisation (PIANGO) appreciates the opportunity to reflect on the Pacific preparatory multi-stakeholder convening to articulate our collective efforts in working towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and the 2050 Strategy and implementation.

While we are inspired by the aspiration of our 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in July 2022 that envisioned a pathway to enhance regional coordination and accelerate the SDGs progress in the Pacific, we need to reflect on some of the key findings of Pacific Regional Sustainable Report 2022 that highlighted that none of the 21 targets of the SDGs that were to be achieved by 2020 has been realized. So how do we see the 2050 Strategy be the drive to improve our performance on the implementation of the SDGs to ensure that public services are delivered to people that are mostly need of those services? We are in a critical juncture that we asked these questions while we are in the process of developing the Implementation and the review of the regional architecture for the 2050 Strategy.

The focus of this Forum to focus on the cluster of goals – SDG 6 on Clean water and Sanitation, SDGs 7 on Affordable and Clean Energy, SDGs 9 on Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure, SDGs 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDGs 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. These set of Goals under review is interesting because these exact goals were tested during Covid 19 and how our Government, Development Partners and other stakeholders responded to safeguarding our Pacific people to Covid 19 but also to the impact of Climate related disasters. Our communities are still struggle with access to clean water in time of covid and climate drought let alone contaminated water due to sea level rising and specific situation such as Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha’apai ashfall. Affordable and Clean Energy and Infrastructure and sustainable Cities and Communities – We have practices from communities base groups and civil societies across our region where they took a community value based and traditional knowledge to integrate science and traditional knowledge to influence behavior changes in revitalizing traditional practices in infrastructure – our traditional housing architecture that have been tested to survive 5 Category cyclone, and sustainable traditional voyaging that are being tested in our northern Pacific in Marshall Islands where clean energy in sea transport is possible especially when its incorporated into a cultural learning for our young people to look at alternative ways of doing things. The Partnership Goal needs to be re-emphasised that Civil Society should not be considered as a Partner of choice but a crucial part of the Development eco-system.

At the global level, Civil Society Organisation has been mandated in the Busan Partnership in para 22 recognising Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and networks as Development Actors in our own right and are more than development delivery partners. They are essential development actors that can hold governments to account and provide a voice and empowerment for communities, in particular those most marginalised. The most recent development In line with the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance donor partners to the Pacific should work to support civic space and civil society actors. Pacific Governments and Pacific development partners must include CSOs in the decision-making process, the development of national and regional policies, strategies, and their implementation.
As Pacific civil society our work is centred on Pacific values and guided by the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the Pacific Principles for Development Effectiveness and the accompanying and many Climate Emergency Declaration including the most recent CSOs Kioa Declaration.

Investing in long-term, respectful and genuine partnerships takes time and trust to develop, and can evolve in unpredictable ways. There needs to be more effort invested in consultation and dialogue. Enabling locally led approaches ensures the long-term sustainability of development actions and empowers skilled and knowledgeable local leaders and organisations.

As Pacific CSOs we call for Pacific Development Partners (including donor governments, INGOs, development contractors and multilateral institutions) and Pacific Leaders to prioritise:

- placing local and indigenous voice and knowledge at the centre of Pacific development
- strengthening and supporting civil society as development actors in their own right urgent and effective climate action through strengthened cooperation, collaboration and co-implementation with civil societies.

For the SDGs and the 2050 Strategy to improve the well being of our Pacific people, we need to allow thinking spaces for our Pacific people to articulate and rethink development to ensure that its contextualised for our Pacific values in areas that we need to bring diverse views and experiences to informed collective solutions especially on issues that are uncomfortable due to competing interest such as Deep Sea Mining, Self-Determination and human rights abuses that are still presence in our Pacific communities in West Papua, Kanaki, French Polynesia and others. We cannot avoid talking about these hard core issues if we are to ensure that the 2050 Strategies and the remaining obligations for the achievement of SDGs secured the safety and a free Pacific people. The emerging issues of labour mobility, climate displaced relocation and modern slavery as its related to trade and other economic interest of our Countries has to be on the agenda of our Pacific Leaders to bring voices of our Pacific people to find solution and test ideas specifically our young who are going to take us forward to the realisation of the 2050 Strategy. On people centred development, it has to be a development locally led and building on existing systems that people and communities are part of the process of find locally owned solution and financially supported investment in that process and structure accountable mechanism.

PIANGO’s mandate is to strengthen and build the capacity of Pacific NGOS and the civil society sector through giving the sector a voice in policy formulation and strengthening its member organisations. We recognised the good will and ambition of our pacific CSO community to be engaged in the implementation of the 2050 Strategy and to have regional structured mechanism to ensure that we have a system of accountability that can nurture the culture of accountability within our work.