Advancing Pacific Priorities
Message by Head of Office

In 2021, amid the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) of ESCAP have re-affirmed their solid commitment to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway). Pacific member States also showed strong leadership in voicing the challenges and concerns affecting PSIDS that required concerted regional and global action at various platforms.

One such platform was the 8th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) held in March 2021 which was chaired by the Fiji Minister of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. Participating member States welcomed contributions made to the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 and called for increased collaboration around priority areas, taking into consideration the 2019 High-Level Mid-Term Review for the SAMOA Pathway. The Forum also noted that climate change remained the greatest threat to PSIDS and requested better access to climate finance and adaptive capacity building, referencing the 'Pacific 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent'.

At the 77th Session of the ESCAP Commission held in April 2021, PSIDS leaders including those of Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Fiji, stressed the importance of regional action for building back better from crises in the Asia Pacific region, and particularly for broadening social protection and strengthening connectivity for promoting recovery from COVID-19.

Last but not least, PSIDS participated in the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) to urge the global community to step up efforts to achieve the Paris Agreement, as PSIDS, while least responsible for carbon emissions would bear the worst impacts of climate change. At the same time, the side event on climate mobility organized by ESCAP and PCCM-HS Partners made it clear that the Pacific would do everything possible collectively to survive sea-level rise and the climate emergency.

With 2030 rapidly approaching, progress on achieving the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs have been hampered by the triple crisis of COVID-19, natural disasters and fragile economies related to the inherent vulnerabilities of small island developing states.

This short publication is an important way of ESCAP’s expressing its support to the efforts of the PSIDS to implement of the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway in the Pacific, and lists for the information of the readers the key projects and activities ESCAP has worked on in 2021 in close collaboration with our Pacific member States, Pacific regional organisations, and the UN family in the Pacific.

There will be regular updates on ESCAP’s work in an effort to strengthen communication and build deeper and wider connections with member States in the Pacific and key stakeholders.

Iosefa Maiava
Head, ESCAP Subregional Office for the Pacific
About the UNESCAP Pacific Office

The ESCAP Subregional Office for the Pacific (SOP – also commonly known as ESCAP Pacific Office (EPO)) covers Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, as well as American Samoa, the Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, New Caledonia, Niue and the Northern Mariana Islands as associate members.

Pacific Small Island Developing States at a Glance

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-6.4</td>
<td>4130.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>44.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population 11,734,970 (2018)  
Land Area 551,341 km square

Net ODA received (% of GNI) 2019

- 9.96%

SOP serves as the gateway for ESCAP’s work in the Pacific and focuses on supporting PSIDS to attain the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and implement the SAMOA Pathway.

Utilizing its comparative advantage and role as the development arm of the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific, in response to the call by SIDS member States for UN entities to develop a SIDS-specific offer, SOP developed a Pacific Strategy 2020-2024 that responds to key challenges including climate and disaster vulnerability, geographical remoteness and smallness, increasing hardship and exclusion, and coordination challenges.

ESCAP’s Pacific Strategy focuses on the following five areas to contribute to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

- Climate change and disaster risk reduction to enhance the capacity of Pacific SIDS to manage the dual risks of climate change and disasters and build resilience;
- Sustainable management and use of the oceans to unlock the potential of sustainable ocean-based economies in the Pacific;
- Regional integration and connectivity to take advantage of sustainable growth opportunities and synergies in ICT, trade, sustainable energy and sustainable maritime transport;
- Social inclusion, poverty alleviation and gender equality to realize the vision of social inclusion and equality of opportunities in the SAMOA Pathway;
- Partnership, data, monitoring and reporting to meet the unprecedented demand for authoritative data and statistics and genuine partnerships for transformative action.

To achieve these objectives, SOP (i) facilitates multilateral dialogue, knowledge sharing and networking at the national, subregional and regional levels, (ii) conducts research and develops analytical knowledge products for policy advice and technical assistance, (iii) provides capacity building support at the national, subregional and regional levels; and (iv) supports the subregional architecture in the Pacific including through cooperation with CROP agencies, UNDS and other mechanisms implemented through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS).
Facilitating intergovernmental dialogue in the Pacific

Fifth Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2021

The Fifth Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (PFSD) in 2021 was co-hosted with the Government of Fiji under the theme “Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the context of COVID-19 and the climate emergency” on 25-26 November 2021. PFSD was held in hybrid mode with more than 100 participants attending in person (Sigatoka, Fiji) and on-line. The PFSD provided an inclusive and unique platform for Pacific member States to share perspectives and learn from each other on their common priorities and approaches to address COVID-19 and the climate change crisis, and included discussions on progress in SDG implementation with a focus on SDGs 4 (Education), 5 (Gender), 14 (Oceans), 15 (Land) and 17 (Partnerships). The PFSD also incorporated a capacity building workshop to support follow-up actions highlighted through the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) of members on the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda.

The Fifth PFSD voiced the following key messages, among others:

- The need for urgent action and financing to address climate displacement and additional debt taken on as a result of COVID-19. PSIDS need more direct access to climate finance, innovative finance, and more flexibility in using different financing modalities. In this regard, ESCAP and PIFS will organize a Regional Ministerial Debt Conference in 2022 to discuss debt management issues and innovative solutions for PSIDS;

- Limitations in SDG data in PSIDS should be addressed through specific and sustained efforts;

- Social protection coverage still remained low in PSIDS with less than 2% of GDP spent on social protection and even less (0.5%) on disability and related measures. In this regard, ESCAP’s Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific should be further contextualized for the Pacific region to take stronger cooperation initiatives;

- Stimulate the Pacific economic recovery strategy through leveraging trade priorities, while reaffirming the Pacific Aid for Trade Strategy with a focus on the Regional E-Commerce Strategy and Roadmap;

- Promote clean energy solutions in support of national SDG 7 roadmaps and utilize regional cooperation to facilitate energy transition.

It is the smallest and the poorest among us who may face the greatest challenges in this pandemic, and in our pursuit to build back better we must remember that no island is left behind.

H.E. David Kabua
President of the Republic of Marshall Islands
77th Session of ESCAP, 2021
II. Situation analysis and challenges for achieving SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway: Priorities for accelerated action

One of our most prominent issues is the adverse effects of climate change on our daily lives. I am thankful for the support we continue to receive from our partners which have assisted us in our tireless work to build resilience against climate change impacts and relieve pressure on our scarce and limited financial resources.

H.E. Taneti Maamau, President of Kiribati
77th Session of ESCAP, 2021

1. Climate change and disaster risk reduction

As of June 2021, there were 76,581 people affected by COVID-19. In 2020, 359,636 people were affected by natural disasters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>People affected by COVID-19</th>
<th>People affected by natural disasters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under the worst-case climate change scenario, populations exposed to multiple hazards in PSIDS is expected to be between 1-30 per cent.
- In 2020 and 2021, PSIDS experienced the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic which were exacerbated by natural disasters including Cyclone Harold which caused extensive loss and damages in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.
- Under the worst-case climate change scenario, populations exposed to multiple hazards in PSIDS is expected to be between 1-30 per cent;
- Average annual losses (AAL) as a percentage of GDP in PSIDS are among the highest in the Asia Pacific region with AALs reaching close to 25 per cent of GDP in the case of Vanuatu.
- To address the extreme vulnerability to climate change and exposure to disaster risk of PSIDS, implementing effective climate change adaptation measures and building resilience against complex and cascading disasters are urgent priorities
- Adaptation costs are higher as a percentage of GDP in PSIDS but still only a fraction of AALs due to disasters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total climate adaptation cost as per cent of GDP</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia..</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Highlights of ESCAP’s work on supporting climate change adaptation and disaster resilience in the Pacific in 2021:

**Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security (PCCMHS) Programme**

This joint-UN agency programme is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as the lead agency, ESCAP, International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). The programme seeks to protect and empower communities adversely affected by climate change and disasters in the Pacific region, focusing specifically on climate change and disaster-related migration, displacement and planned relocation.

Continuing from the series of regional policy dialogues organized by ESCAP which discussed how climate change and disasters affect mobility trends in the Pacific Islands; the challenges and opportunities to enhance protection of people migrating owing to climate change; relevant initiatives at the global, regional and national levels and outline options for a Pacific regional approach, Joint Working Group was set up under the Co-Chairs, Fiji and Tuvalu, and with Member States, Regional Organisations and UN Agencies as members, to develop a regional framework for climate mobility.


To support PSIDS on securing financial resources to implement priority adaptation measures and post COVID-19 recovery, ESCAP, as part of its programme on Financing for Development, organized a workshop in cooperation with PIFS with the aim to enhance the capacity of key stakeholders to understand the different types of innovative instruments of climate finance and how to mobilize such resources.

The Workshop recognized that there was an annual average financing gap in PSIDS of around USD 220 million for climate change mitigation and adaptation in 2020, and discussed potential options for filling the financing gap including the issuance of sustainability bonds, debt-for-climate swaps, and through strengthened engagements with international financing institutions, private sector and creditor nations.

The key outcomes of the Workshop were shared at the Pacific Islands Forum Economic Ministers’ Meeting in July 2021, and the Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in November 2021.

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### 2. Sustainable management and use of the oceans

- Most Pacific Small Island Developing States are ‘ocean-based economies’ wholly dependent on fisheries, maritime transport, extractive industries and tourism.
- Yet progress on achieving SAMOA Pathway Priority Area (5) Oceans and Seas and SDG 14: Life below Water are not on track and lack of reliable data makes monitoring progress extremely challenging.
- The 75th session of ESCAP in 2019 with the proposal of the Chairman of the Pacific Islands Forum and President of the Republic of Nauru, decided that the theme for its 76th session would be “Promoting economic, social and environmental cooperation on oceans for sustainable development”.
- Subsequently in 2020, at the 76th session of the Commission, member States adopted Resolution 76/1 “Strengthening cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”
Globally, 2021 marked the first year of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and ESCAP supports its implementation in the Asia Pacific through the Regional Decade Programme launched on the Fourth Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean on 27 October 2021.

Highlights of ESCAP’s work on supporting sustainable management and use of the oceans in the Pacific in 2021:

Second Global Dialogue on Ocean Accounting

The Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) was launched by ESCAP and other stakeholders to develop a shared technical framework for ocean accounting and deliver capacity-building activities that support the development, maintenance and ongoing use of holistic ocean accounts in decision-making that link together social, environmental and economic statistics.

The Second Global Dialogue was hosted by the Government of Canada on April 20, 2021 and focused on progress on ocean accounting methodology; progress on pilot projects and updates from GOAP partners.

In addition, in 2022, ESCAP will assist PSIDS with measurement of specific ocean related indicators in the National Ocean Policy and related national and SDG initiatives with pilots in Fiji and Palau.

The unprecedented and prolonged nature of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have a significant and longer-lasting impact on unemployment, inequality and poverty.

In PSIDS where countries have limited capacity to respond to shocks of this magnitude, greater action will be needed to counter the negative outcomes of COVID-19 on social development.

Low rates of women’s labour force participation also have left women more vulnerable to shocks, as women tend to work in informal sectors not protected by labour laws and excluded from social protection schemes.

Low social protection coverage, at a third of potential beneficiaries in the Pacific Islands, is an important indicator of vulnerability to pandemics and economic and climate-related shocks. Financing universal social protection coverage is smart investment and I recognize the need for the Pacific to look at how we can benefit from the ‘Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific”

Honourable Kausea Natano
Prime Minister of Tuvalu and Chairman of the PIF
77th Session of ESCAP

3. Social inclusion

Social protection expenditures

(% of GDP)

- Pacific island developing States
- OECD (Asia Pacific)

Social inclusion
Persons with disabilities in PSIDS are among the poorest and most marginalized members of society with limited access to jobs, education and social services.

PSIDS leadership committed to upholding the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Highlights of ESCAP’s work on promoting social inclusion in the Pacific in 2021:


ESCAP published a report on legislative compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the Pacific in order to enhance understanding of the nature and extent of discrimination against persons with disabilities that currently exist in constitutional and legislative frameworks in the Pacific, as well as the opportunities and options for reforms towards harmonization with the CRPD. A set of legal research across seven Pacific island countries and nine national and state jurisdictions culminated in a comprehensive comparative analysis and tailor-made recommendations on disability legislation. While the pathways toward CRPD compliance differ by countries, some common and noteworthy priorities for law reform included taking a gender inclusive approach and removing attitudinal and legal barriers for persons with disabilities (https://www.unescap.org/kp/2021/inequality-discrimination-and-exclusion-assessing-crpd-compliance-pacific-island-0).

Catalyzing Women’s Entrepreneurship

Catalyzing Women’s Entrepreneurship programme aims to advance women entrepreneurship and market participation for poverty reduction, improved livelihoods and economic growth. The programme works to create an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs to effectively start-up and/ or expand their businesses by enhancing women entrepreneurs’ access and use of financial services; strengthening women entrepreneurs’ use of ICT and digital solutions to support their business; and through policy and advocacy initiatives. This programme has been formally launched in 2019 in six countries including Fiji and Samoa. In 2021, ESCAP organized a Training of Trainers: Enhancing the capacities of women entrepreneurs in Samoa on using ICT tools in their business on 21 January to strengthen capacities of Samoa Business Hub trainers in providing training support to women entrepreneurs on using digital tools in financial management. From 6 April to 16 April, ESCAP also organized a community workshop on ICT tools for financial management for women entrepreneurs in Savaii, Samoa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Most Recent Year</th>
<th>Most Recent Value</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fili</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia, Fed. Sts.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>68.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Regional integration and connectivity

We do not have the large, broad-based economies and financial tools that large developed and advanced developing countries have to spur recovery. Recovery is truly a longer and steeper road for us.

Honourable Josaia V. Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji
77th Session of ESCAP, 2021

Many of the challenges for economic growth in PSIDS arise from their geographic characteristics including remoteness, limited landmass, small populations, modest size of their economies and high exposure and vulnerability to external environmental and economic shocks.

- The combination of being far from export markets and import resources, added to low and irregular international traffic volumes make international trade inefficient and costly for PSIDS.
- As a result PSIDS are burdened with high costs of energy, infrastructure, transportation and communication.
- Fiji, Palau, Samoa and Vanuatu were among the hardest hit by COVID-19 in the Asia Pacific region with double-digit or close to double-digit recessions in 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Real GDP growth (Percentage)</th>
<th>Inflation * (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2020*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific 5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific island developing economies</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>-6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>-7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>-5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia (Federated States of)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>-5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>-9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021
While PSID economies are expected to recover in 2022, the pandemic is likely to result in permanent losses in output of around US $11 billion over the 2020-2022 period.

Enhancing regional integration and connectivity in areas of trade, transport, energy and ICT can help strengthen resilience against future external shocks are essential strategies for building forward better.

Investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, clean energy, ICT connectivity and cross-border maritime connectivity provides a strong foundation for economic growth and brings benefits for social and environmental development.

Highlights of ESCAP’s work on strengthening regional integration and connectivity in the Pacific in 2021:

- **Energy -**

  **Assisting PSIDS on developing SDG 7 Roadmaps**

  Transitioning the energy sector to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the objectives of the Paris Agreement presents a complex and difficult task for policymakers. In this regard, ESCAP has developed the National Expert SDG Tool for Energy Planning (NEXTSTEP). This tool enables policymakers to make informed policy decisions to support the achievement of the SDG7 targets as well as emission reduction targets. ESCAP is currently partnering with two Pacific countries- Fiji and Tonga- to undertake SDG 7 roadmap development using NEXTSTEP. From 30 March to 7 April 2021, ESCAP carried out a capacity building workshop on Developing SDG 7 Roadmap using NEXTSTEP for countries in the Pacific. In addition, the Sixth Meeting of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity held on 30 June 2021, focused on discussions for applying energy connectivity concepts befitted to the Pacific island members and associate members.

- **ICT -**

  **Developing the Pacific Internet Exchange Point (IXP)**

  In the Pacific, few countries have established Internet Exchange Points (IXP) despite their benefits of improved affordability, latency and traffic capacity of the internet. To support the establishment of IXPs, ESCAP organized a capacity building workshop in 2019 following the request from Solomon Islands to exchange ideas on how to operationalize the Pacific IXP proposal. A second capacity building workshop was held in 2020, followed by national consultations in the target countries (Fiji, Samoa and New Zealand) to raise awareness of various domestic stakeholders regarding possible options to build the Pacific IXP. Continuing this work in 2021, ESCAP organized multistakeholder consultations in Pacific Island countries on the IXP proposal on 24-26 August and a follow-up capacity training workshop on Operationalizing the Pacific IXP Proposal on 2 November with government officials responsible for ICT, IXP authorities, regulators and internet service providers. Additionally, ESCAP published a study on national costings of a Pacific IXP to contribute to the dialogue on establishing a Pacific IXP (A Study on national costings of a Pacific Internet Exchange Point | ESCAP (unescap.org).

- **Trade -**

  **Trade Development Strategy for Tuvalu**

  The Government of Tuvalu is developing a Tuvalu National Trade Development Strategy with the aim of mainstreaming trade into national development strategies and set up structures needed to coordinate the delivery of trade-related technical assistance as well as to build capacity on trade including addressing critical supply-side constraints. To this end, the Government is organizing national workshops to receive feedback from various stakeholders and partners. In 2021, ESCAP, in support of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), a multilateral partnership to support least developed countries (LDCs) organized together with the Tuvalu Department of Trade, an inception and validation workshop to develop this strategy.
5. Data and policy coherence

- Availability of high-quality, timely data to track progress of the SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework remains a significant challenge for the Pacific subregion.

- Only a third of the 232 SDG indicators have sufficient data for assessment in the Pacific

Highlights of ESCAP’s work on promoting data and policy coherence in the Pacific in 2021:

ESCAP National SDG Tracker

ESCAP developed a tool for measuring SDG progress achievement and forecast the likelihood of achieving the SDGs by 2030. To help PSIDS utilize this tool, ESCAP organized an Inception Workshop for the initial rollout of the National SDG Tracker tool for the Pacific on 28 July. The inception workshop is part of a series of four workshops aimed to support countries in identifying and developing national SDG indicators; and refining the regional indicators under the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development which can be used for the Pacific SDG Quadrennial Report and others.

Tuvalu Voluntary National Review (VNR) Workshop, 28-29 October 2021, Funafuti, Tuvalu

A number of development partners from both the UN side, led by ESCAP and UNDP and CROP, led by SPC and PIFS, supported the workshop on Tuvalu’s Voluntary National Review to be presented to the High-Level Political Forum in July 2022. During the workshop, the Government of Tuvalu updated participants on Tuvalu’s status on SDG implementation followed by an extensive overview of the VNR process.
III. Working through partnerships and supporting the Pacific subregional architecture

Strengthening partnerships with members of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP)

**Signing of Memorandum of Understanding with the Pacific Community (SPC), 26 April**

ESCAP and SPC have been working to promote inclusive and sustainable development of PSIDS including least developed countries in the Pacific and plan to work together to accelerate the implementation and the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway. Key priority areas for cooperation under the MOU include climate change adaptation; environmental sustainability; sustainable agriculture; sustainable energy; sustainable oceans; sustainable maritime transport; social development; and data and statistics.

**Signing of Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), 25 November**

ESCAP and SPREP have a long history of productive collaboration on knowledge and capacity building activities in the Pacific region. Over the years the partnership has been focusing on the Pacific regional activities to accelerate the implementation and the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway. Through this MOU, ESCAP and SPREP will collaborate on five strategic areas: climate change; environmental governance; sustainable energy and transport; sustainable oceans; and data and statistics.

**Strengthening partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)**
ESCAP Executive Secretary Ms. Armida S. Alisjahbana and Mr. Henry Puna, Secretary-General of PIFS had a bilateral discussion on 20 October 2021 on the sidelines of the Regional Conversation Series on “Financing Sustainable Development and Addressing Debt Risks in the Aftermath of COVID-19”. The two leaders welcomed the active partnership between PIFS and ESCAP on climate financing – a priority called for by the Pacific Forum Leaders and agreed to co-host a Debt Conference for Pacific SIDS in early 2022. The bilateral discussions also included continued commitment to cooperate on the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD) and the Pacific Sustainable Development Report.

Working with the United Nations Development System in the Pacific

**Micronesia Multi-Country Office**

ESCAP is committed to supporting the newly established North Pacific MCO through the deployment of a Regional Advisor for the North Pacific. The Regional Advisor is expected to work closely with the UN team on delivering programmes in support of the five North Pacific member States of ESCAP, namely the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Marshall Islands, Nauru and Kiribati.

**Fiji Multi-Country Office**

ESCAP, through the Joint SDG Fund, is implementing a programme to support the Governments of Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and the Republic of Marshall Islands to build a more integrated approach to financing their national development plans and support Least Developed Country (LDC) graduation processes in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The Joint Programme will support the four PSIDS to formulate and operationalize integrated, costed financing strategies that bring together the policies and instruments through which governments govern public and private financing.

**Samoa Multi-Country Office**

ESCAP, together with UNDP, UNESCO, ILO and UNICEF is implementing a joint initiative on universal social protection through the Joint SDG Fund. The programme on universal social protection is being carried out in four Pacific Island Countries and Territories, namely Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau from 2020 to 2022, and aims to increase resilience through viable and financially sustainable social protection systems that will address life cycle vulnerabilities and strengthen the social protection floors to help accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

**United Nations in Papua New Guinea**

In 2021, ESCAP launched the Decision Support System (DSS) of the Risk and Resilience Portal for five target countries including Papua New Guinea. The DSS is an information system that supports business or organizational decision-making activities by providing a systematic and transparent approach to visualize, compare, and rank disaster risk at the subnational level.
I. Knowledge products for PSIDS in 2021


Flagship Reports


ESCAP Financing for Development Series No. 4: Financing the SDGs to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific, October 2021, [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/Financing%20the%20SDGs-digital%20vF1215.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/Financing%20the%20SDGs-digital%20vF1215.pdf)


Theme Study: Beyond the Pandemic: Building back better from crises in Asia and the Pacific, March 2021, [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/Beyond%20the%20pandemic_Theme%20study.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/Beyond%20the%20pandemic_Theme%20study.pdf)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Venue</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>16 Dec, Funafuti, Tuvalu</td>
<td>Tuvalu Trade Development Strategy Validation Workshop</td>
<td>In support of the Enhanced Integrated Framework, a multilateral partnership to support LDCs, the workshop is organized to develop Tuvalu's trade strategy.</td>
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<td>25-26 Nov, Hybrid, Fiji</td>
<td>Fifth Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (PFSD)</td>
<td>Co-hosted with the government of Fiji, PFSD focused on the progress of implementing the 2030 Agenda in the context of COVID-19 and the climate crisis, social protection and inclusion, regional cooperation initiatives, and financing for development and climate actions.</td>
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<td>16 – 18 Nov, Virtual</td>
<td>Webinar on Data Protection and Privacy for Media/Information Officers and Journalists of the Maldives (Also held a High-Level Briefing on Data Protection and Privacy for Senior Government Officials of the Maldives on 12 October)</td>
<td>Together with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology of the Republic of the Maldives, the webinar was held to enhance understanding among policymakers, regulators and civil servants on the importance of data privacy and protection as the Maldives are currently in the process of drafting their Privacy and Personal Data Protection Act.</td>
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<td>2 Nov, virtual</td>
<td>Capacity training workshop on operationalizing the Pacific Internet Exchange Point (IXP) proposal</td>
<td>Organized to share the final guideline on the operationalization strategy plan for building the Pacific IXP and a draft operational costing study on establishing the Pacific IXP for Fiji, NZ and Samoa.</td>
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<td>28-29 Oct, Tuvalu</td>
<td>Tuvalu VNR Workshop</td>
<td>Discussed preparation of Tuvalu's VNR that will be presented to the HLPF in July 2022 (ESCAP &amp; UNDP + CROP led by SPC and PIFS).</td>
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<td>20-21 Oct, Tuvalu</td>
<td>Inception workshop on formulation of Tuvalu's national trade development strategy</td>
<td>In support of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) the workshop was organized to develop Tuvalu's national trade development strategy and help promote economic growth and sustainable development.</td>
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<td>28 Sep – 1 Oct, Virtual</td>
<td>Capacity Building Webinar on Information Security and Privacy for Pacific Countries</td>
<td>In partnership with CROP, ICT Working Group and Amazon Web Services Institute, ESCAP organized this webinar to help improve national ICT infrastructure and cybersecurity capabilities in PSIDS.</td>
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<td>7 Sep, virtual</td>
<td>National consultation on “Frontier Technology Policy Experimentation and Regulatory Sandboxes for Sustainable Development” for the Maldives</td>
<td>The Maldives is one of three target countries of the project. A sensitization workshop was held on 3rd June 2021 of which the Maldives identified 'Digital currency' and 'Mobile Wallet' as potential focus areas of the project. Following the sensitization workshop, this national consultation was held to examine opportunities and obstacles for advancing the project in the Maldives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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| 4-5 Aug, PNG | PNG | Digital financial literacy and AgriTech training for PNG (East Sepik)  
A similar training was also held for West Sepik on 10-11 June  
Aimed to strengthen the capacities of selected stakeholders as future trainers on the use of relevant ICT applications to improve agriculture productivity, financial services and marketing |
| 28 July, Fiji | Fiji | Pacific National SDG Tracker Workshop Series and Pacific Strategy Inception Workshop  
The workshop was held to enhance the capacity of Pacific end-users on ESCAP's National SDG Tracker, an online tool that guides countries on the necessary steps to produce national progress assessment |
| 30 June, virtual | Virtual | Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity, 6th meeting  
During the third session of the Committee on Energy, there was a request to further define and strengthen energy connectivity in the Pacific to attain SDG 7. In this regard, EWG-EC focused its discussion on applying energy connectivity concepts to the PSIDS |
Together with PIFS jointly organized a virtual workshop on resource mobilization in Pacific SIDS with a focus on how SIDS can mobilize more climate finance either via traditional channels or via innovative instruments such as sustainability bonds |
| 6 April – 16 April | Samoa | Community Workshops on ICT tools for financial management for women entrepreneurs in Savaii, Samoa  
Workshop on Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship was held to support the creation of a Gender Responsive Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Samoa |
Workshop on SDG7 roadmap development using NEXTSTEP in Fiji and Tonga |
| 4 March, virtual | Vanuatu | National workshop on using ESCAP’s online Trade Intelligence and Negotiation Advisor (TINA) for trade negotiations in Vanuatu  
Workshop topics covered include obtaining descriptive trade statistics and indicators, generating and examining in detail an offensive list of products and simulations of tariff liberalization and preference loss scenarios |
| 24-25 Feb, Virtual | Samoa | Samoa Webinar on Information Security and Privacy  
In collaboration with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, ESCAP conducted this webinar in celebration of the Samoa Cybersecurity Week |
| 21 Jan, Samoa | Samoa | Training of Trainers: Enhancing the capacities of women entrepreneurs in Samoa on using ICT tools in their businesses  
Training to strengthen capacities of Samoa Business Hub trainers in providing training support to women entrepreneurs |