



REPORT

REGIONAL CONSULTATION OF PACIFIC LDCS' CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS: REVIEWING KEY ISSUES OF PACIFIC LDCS AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF IPOA AND SDGS

Victoria Palms Hotel, Suva, Fiji

Wednesday 14th – Thursday 15th March, 2018

Hosted by the Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations (PIANGO)

Report prepared by PIANGO

Map of the Pacific

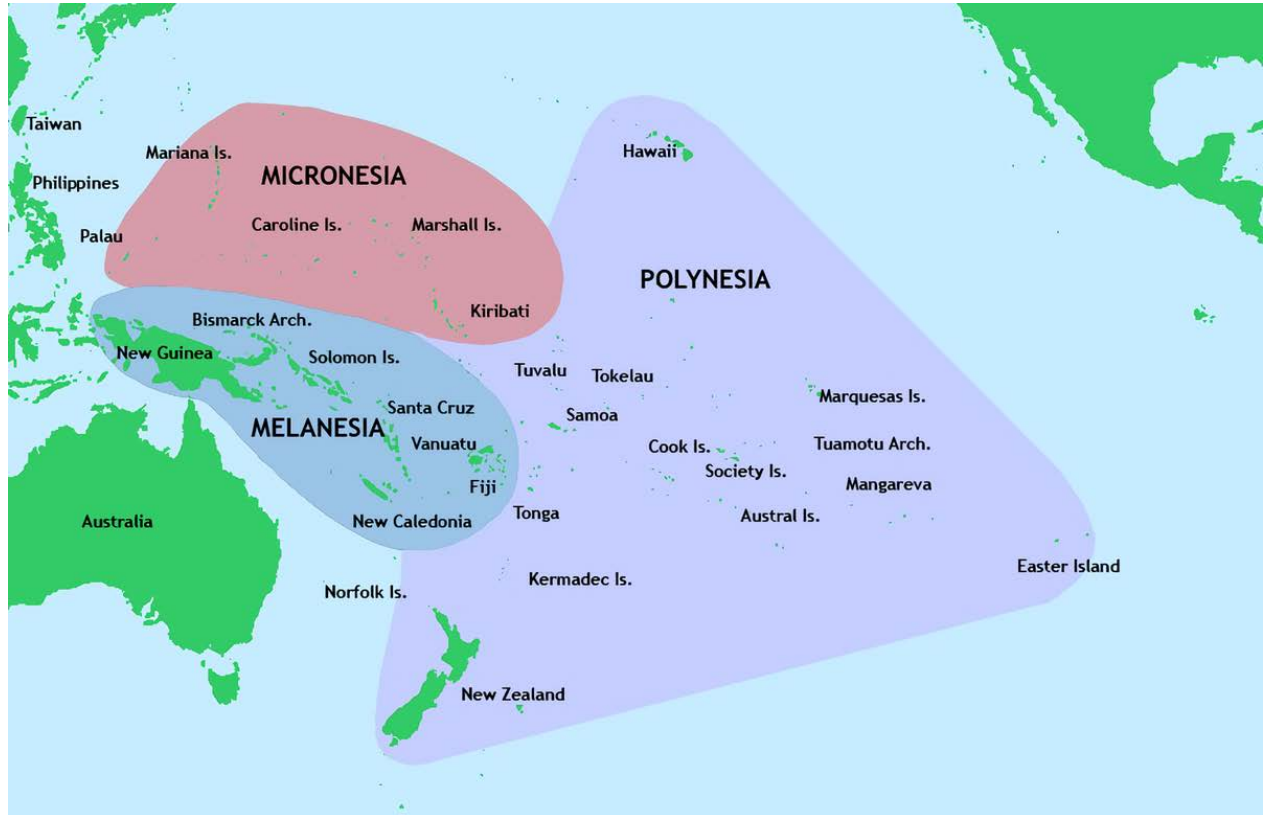


Photo Credit: 2000-2018 Bugbog

Table of Contents	page
Map of Pacific	2
Table of Contents	3
Glossary	4
Executive Summary	5
1.0 Context	7
1.1 Background	
1.2 Pacific LDCs Regional Consultation	
2.0 Keynote Address	9
3.0 Day One Plenary Session	10
4.0 Day Two Plenary Sessions	18
5.0 Appendix:	
Schedule A – Pacific LDCs’ Declaration	24
Schedule B – Programme	28
Schedule C - List of Participants	30

Glossary

CDP	Committee for Development Policy
CoP23	23 rd UN Climate Change Conference of Parties 2017
DSE	Development Services Exchange
FCOSS	Fiji Council of Social Services
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IPoA	Istanbul Programme of Action (2011)
KANGO	Kiribati Association of Nongovernmental Organisations
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
PANG	Pacific Network on Globalisation
PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Nongovernmental Organisations
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PICAN	Pacific Islands Climate Action Network
SEEP	Social Empowerment Education Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals (also Agenda 2030)
SAMOA Pathway	Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SUNGO	Samoa Umbrella of Nongovernmental Organisations
TANGO	Tuvalu Association of Nongovernmental Organisations
VANGO	Vanuatu Association of Nongovernmental Organisations
UNESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Executive Summary

Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organization (PIANGO) in partnership with LDC Watch, held a two-day Regional Consultation for Pacific LDC's Civil Society Organisations, on 14 - 15 March 2018 in Suva, Fiji. The theme of the Regional Consultation was *Reviewing Key Issues of Pacific LDCs and the achievement of IPOA and SDGs*. The key objective of the workshop was to raise the level of awareness among Pacific LDC-CSOs, on the current status and remedial measure of key issues namely; Climate Change Adaptation and International Support, Energy Security, Trade, Technology Transfer and International Cooperation.

The Least Developed Country (LDC) category for the Pacific region include Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. These countries have all met the graduation criteria to move into the middle-income country category by either meeting the "income-only" threshold, or a combination of the "income and human assets" index criteria. However, there remains a significant margin for meeting the economic vulnerability index criterion, thus casting doubts on the ability of these countries to sustain their development gains in the long run.

Some of the broad challenges faced by the Pacific LDCs in trying to overcome the economic vulnerability index criterion are namely, finance, technology know-how, capacity building, trade rules that are open and equitable, and systemic issues of require better coherence, synergy, transparency and accountability. Pacific LDC - CSO delegates have emphasized the critical importance of their inclusion in trade negotiations such as Pacer Plus which affects community livelihoods in the transition to graduation. The Outcome Document of the two-day consultation reflects similar sentiments and advocates for increased policy space for civil society engagement.

Process

The Pacific LDC Regional Consultation in Suva brought together key representatives from CSO umbrella organisations in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Recent graduate Samoa, was also invited to the regional consultation to share their experiences and lessons learnt, in navigating the "smooth transition" from the LDC category, which would be useful to the remaining Pacific LDCs on the verge of graduating. In attendance also were key CSO representatives from Niue, Cook Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Also represented at the two-day meet were regional organisations: UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP – Sub-regional office for the Pacific), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), CoP23 Fiji Secretariat, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), University of the South Pacific (USP) and Fiji-based CSOs: Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) and Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), Pacific

Islands Climate Action Network (PICAN) and Social Empowerment and Education Programme (SEEP).

PIANGO Board member and SUNGO President, Roina Faatauvaavavatau and LDC Watch Global Coordinator, Gauri Pradhan provided brief introductory and welcoming remarks to participants, as co-conveners for the two-day Consultation. LDC Watch emphasized graduation as a journey, a process, and not necessarily the destination. The Consultation expected to provide participants with learning and insights about the process; the experiences and challenges each Pacific LDC has faced in trying to move towards graduation into middle-income country status, particularly in light of setbacks caused by climate change. Message from LDC Watch President Demba Dembele was conveyed highlighting his support for the Pacific LDC Regional Consultation as LDC Watch thanked PIANGO for organizing the Consultation.

Keynote speaker Iosefo Maiava, Head of UNESCAP-Sub-regional Office for the Pacific, opened the formal discussions, followed by plenary-styled presentations and floor discussion throughout the consultation which was facilitated by PIANGO. The workshop culminated with a draft Declaration that emerged from the two-day discussion, with technical assistance provided by co-conveners LDC Watch and PIANGO.

1.0 Context

1.1 Background

Established in 1971 by the UN General Assembly, the category of a Least Developed Country (LDC) is determined through a three-fold criterion: per capita gross national income (GNI), human asset index (HAI) and economic vulnerability index (EVI) to external shocks. The latter two are measured by two indices of structural impediments, namely the human assets index and the economic vulnerability index. As LDCs represent the poorest and weakest link in the international community, focusing on them as a special category of countries is intended to attract and harness international support towards them, as the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the UN family. LDC status is also subject to a country agreeing to be placed in that category.

The Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a subsidiary body of the UN Economic and Social Council, is mandated to review the category of LDCs every three years and monitor their progress after graduation from the category. To become eligible for graduation, a country must reach threshold levels for graduation for at least two of the referenced three criteria, or its GNI per capita must exceed at least twice the threshold level, and the likelihood that the level of GNI per capita is sustainable must be deemed high. Further, to be recommended for graduation, an LDC must be found eligible at two successive triennial reviews by the CDP.

At the 2012 triennial review of the list, the CDP found Vanuatu and Tuvalu to be eligible for graduation for the third consecutive time and recommended for graduation from the list. The Committee also found Kiribati eligible for graduation for the first time as it met the GNI per capita and HAI criteria. On 4 December 2013, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the CDP and ECOSOC to graduate Equatorial Guinea and Vanuatu. Exceptionally, both received additional preparation time and were to graduate in 3 1/2 and 4 years respectively. Currently however, Samoa is the only Pacific country to have recently graduated, in 2014. The next review of LDCs is scheduled for later this year.

1.2 Pacific LDCs Regional Consultation

The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, commonly known as “Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA)” and adopted to address the special needs of the LDCs, is aimed at overcoming the structural challenges of LDCs by building human and productive capacities and thereby, enable graduation from the LDC category.ⁱ This is closely linked to the SAMOA Pathway which calls for international cooperation to support SIDS in overcoming their particular vulnerabilities and compound effects of climate change. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development supports both IPoA and SAMOA Pathway as it forms an integral part of the two agendas. Further, it has a special focus on LDCs as the most vulnerable

countries under “equality” and the development principle of "Leaving no one behind, while focusing on all dimensions of sustainable development. A vast majority of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are already covered by the IPoA. The IPoA and the Samoa Pathway cover all three pillars of sustainable development with the IPoA placing greater emphasis on social pillar, whilst the Samoa Pathway focuses more on the environmental pillar. Understanding the complementarities among these programmes allows policy makers to design effective and coherent policy and CSOs to influence the designing of policy.

The Regional Consultation for Pacific LDC’s Civil Society Organizations aimed to assess and review policies and programmes of Pacific LDC Governments, their development partners organizations, other multilateral organizations and the media, with regard to the above key issues, implementation of Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) and achievement of SDGs. Five (5) out of 47 Least Developed Countries in the world, are situated in the Pacific region. Pacific LDCs namely, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu are also considered Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and have been making some notable progress towards meeting the criteria for graduation, having met both the income-only criterion and human asset criterion, with the exception of Timor-Leste who is yet to meet the latter criteria. However, Solomon Islands alone had earlier met both the regular income and human asset threshold in 2015ⁱⁱ. In summary, all five countries meet at least one criterion for graduation - be it the income-only criteria or through the combination on Human Asset Index and GNI per capita. The Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended Vanuatu for graduation by December 2020.

The prevailing challenge for the Pacific LDCs, as Small Island Developing States (LDC-SIDS), is reducing their economic vulnerability index. The economic vulnerability index can be divided into eight components namely, population, remoteness, share of population in low-elevated coastal zones, instability of exports, merchandise export concentration, victims of natural disasters, agricultural instability and share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in GDP. Among these components, instability of exports of goods and services is the single largest component, accounting for 21% of the total. Export concentration is another important component accounting for 9%. However, the largest source of economic vulnerability for these countries comes from having a small population and geographic challenges, such as remoteness and share of population living in low-elevated areas (ESCAP, 2016). While these LDCs are in their process of graduating, they are still highly vulnerable to external environmental and economic shocks. This renders the implementation process for a smooth transition from LDC status to middle income country particularly important.

2.0 Keynote Address

Mr. Iosefo Maiava, Head of UNESCAP Sub-regional Office in the Pacific, acknowledged the space provided by PIANGO and LDC Watch to convene a dialogue between CSOs from the five Least Developed Countries (LDC) in the Pacific region.

Agenda 2030 offers new vision, a new window for the development paradigm for Pacific LDCs as it recognises LDCs and SIDS and provides a new way of looking at the graduation process. This has led the UN system to review and reform its own processes ensuring that it is 'fit for purpose'. The new development paradigm examines closely the underlying structural issues, or root causes that challenge and impede development. Using the analogy of the root of a tree, the deeper the roots the more resilient the tree but if any of the roots becomes rotten then it affects the overall health of the tree. Hence, the root problem must be identified and treated if the tree is to remain standing.

Similarly, the deferment of graduation for Pacific LDCs is due to the economic vulnerability index. One of the quickest ways to get to the root causes delaying meeting this criterion is to look closely at the country's peace and conflict issues - for sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security. Conversely, peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. Therefore, SDG16 is a specific goal dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels. There must be emphasis on the SDGs "indivisibility and mutual dependency" and their dependency on peace and security to flourish.ⁱⁱⁱ

How do you maintain resilience in an environment or, maintain a culture of peace and security? Review the Economic, Social and Environment pillars and specifically target factors of employment, ensure macro-stability, address poverty issues, inclusiveness in policy-making and its implementation, social protection and gender equality, disaster-risk preparedness and natural resource management. Although the Pacific is characterized as peaceful, it has its share of violence and ethnic tensions for e.g. Fiji, Bougainville, PNG and Solomon Islands. SAMOA Pathway places high priority on good governance and institutions – these are essential for risk mitigation, poverty eradication, social protection and most importantly, conflict prevention. Risk factors are triggers not underlying causes. Under IPoA, poverty is recognized as underlying cause of conflict. Hence, eradication of extreme poverty is closely linked with peace and security in countries. If issues of peace and security persist, it indicates underlying causes have not been treated. An unmanaged migration is a symptom of these structural issues not being adequately addressed.

The UN Human Security Framework reviewed in 2012 consists of seven essential dimensions of human security: economic, health, personal, political, food, environmental and community. In 2017, a further review expanded on the concept of security to include: "*human security*,

humanitarian assistance... environmental security and regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters and climate change”.

Maiava challenged the delegates with the question that if they are to positively influence the graduation criteria in the interests of the Pacific LDCs, then the outcome of this consultation should be used to advocate and lobby governments, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP), regional and global CSO networks and encourage CSO participation in the CDP’s graduation assessments in the Pacific.

3.0 DayOne Plenary Sessions

SESSION 1: OVERVIEW OF ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION AND FOLLOW UP PROGRAMMES

Mr. Gauri Pradhan, Global Coordinator for LDC Watch, introduced the origin and history of LDC Watch.^{iv} There are currently 47 LDCs globally, of which 5 are in the Pacific region. LDCs are reviewed by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) of the UN ECOSOC every three years, with the next review due by end of this year (2018). The Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs (IPoA) for the decade 2011-2020 was adopted at the Fourth UN Conference on the LDCs in Istanbul, Turkey,^v which the overarching goal to “to overcome the structural challenges faced by least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category”. Five salient features that characterize LDCs are: **persistent, structural challenges** and volatile economic growth; high vulnerability to both internal and external economic shocks, volatile commodity prices, **climate change consequences** and natural disasters; constrained by structural poverty, resources and capacities; and suffer by stagnant trade and investment flows and lower level of productivity.

Mr. Pradhan agreed broadly with the keynote speaker in that although the Pacific LDCs have all met the human index criterion and low-income criterion, surmounting the economic vulnerability index threshold continues to remain a major challenge. Samoa, a recent graduate continues to be assailed by structural challenges.

IPoA had been well integrated with MDGs and continues to remain relevant to SAMOA Pathways and the SDGs in providing a broader, comprehensive and strengthened global platform. IPoA is more comprehensive than SDGs in Goals 2, 5, 7, 9 and 13 and less comprehensive in Goals 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16. However, under Goal 17, IPoA is equally comprehensive as both agendas recognize the importance of enhancing the role of civil society in the development efforts of LDCs. Further, paragraphs 13, 39 and 155 of the IPoA, calls for encouraging civil society to contribute to the implementation of the IPoA in its respective

areas of competence in line with the national priorities of the LDCs through policy dialogue to ensure an inclusive and participatory development process in LDCs; and calls on UNOHRLLS to continue its awareness-raising and advocacy work in favour of LDCs in partnership with civil society as a key stakeholder.

This regional consultation brings together CSO representatives from Pacific LDCs to reflect upon the implementation of IPoA. Consultations at the national level are coordinated with national focal points who bring together national-based CSOs to advocate and build capacity. At the global level, consultations are held every 5 years that bring together LDCs' national focal points. CSOs play a pivotal role in the aligning and incorporating a negotiated graduation strategy for their respective LDCs, one that is sustainable and is able to be closely monitored to ensure accountability of developed partners with respect to their commitments under IPoA in areas of finance, technology and policy coherence. LDC Watch is aware of the shrinking spaces for CSO engagement in many LDCs despite calls for broad partnerships and recognises that LDC governments have a lot of work to do and ensuring sustainability is key if a graduate country is not to be placed at risk of reverting to LDC status within a few years after graduation.

SESSION 2: TRADE, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Ms. Veniana Qalo, Trade Advisor, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) discussed the following topics: Framework for Pacific Regionalism: ICT and development; trade and transfer of technology; key targets in IPoA; selected stats on Pacific LDCs^{vi} progress in meeting graduation criteria; means of implementation of Agenda 2030 on trade and technology and trade and transfer of technology in WTO Agreements; Working Group on trade and transfer of technology and lastly, what international support measures are there. Some of these topics are summarised below as others have been discussed elsewhere during the two-day consultation.

Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR) reflects leaders' vision of ICT and development as a priority area - in the use of technology to achieve competitiveness. Impact of technology on economic growth and development in this increasingly interdependent world is well recognized in terms of jobs and wealth creation; income generation, value addition, achieving economies of scale, businesses, academia, international institutions and their interaction. The 2016 mid-term review^{vii} revealed some success stories that well reflected the leaders' vision. As knowledge increasingly becomes a key strategic resource for national economic development, there is a need to identify appropriate means to facilitate transfer of technology to LDCs. Domestic regulatory framework will be critical to facilitate efficient and effective generation, application and transfer of technology, in the pursuit of any development strategy. Technology improvement has a major impact in the overall performance of the manufacturing industry given its higher value-added production; as well as in the agricultural sector. Pacific leaders

have identified fisheries as a priority area in the region and have mandated countries to identify strategies for value-adding to fisheries, such as canning processes. However, issues under trade and technology transfer are closely intertwined with issues pertaining to international trade liberalisation^{viii} and foreign direct investment.

Under the International Trading System, WTO Agreements contain a number of provisions relating to the transfer of technology to LDCs.^{ix} The WTO Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology is mandated to examine the relationship between trade and transfer of technology and make recommendations on possible steps within WTO mandate to increase flows of technology and transfer of know-how to developing countries. The graduation process of LDCs requires providing concrete international support measures (ISM) that commensurate with the LDC development needs. Further, the assessment of trade impacts on LDC economies as well as post-graduation need to be closely examined. In summary, donors need to deliver on commitments to the level of ODAs to LDCs; LDC Finance Facilitation Mechanism needs to increase in order to accelerate LDCS access to official finance and reduce burden on limited institutional capacity. The establishment of the Technology Bank and other graduation-plus strategies that sustain development by building capacity and structural transformation.

Ms. Maureen Penjueli, Director, Pacific Network on Globalisation discussed some of the key issues on trade that needed reflection, in the lead up to graduation. A key contextual factor that directly affected trade and economic development in the Pacific region is the geographical remoteness of the Pacific Island countries. Their physical “smallness” in the world’s largest ocean poses a special challenge in terms of limited land available for agricultural activities - that produces little for local consumption and sale to the domestic and export markets. Access to finance for agricultural development is also very limited and traditional production methods are still being used to create vibrant semi-formal economies. Pacific LDCs are largely subsistence-based - a resilient feature, as they move towards export-based commodities. Tuvalu for instance, looks to the fishing industry as a key export commodity for trade. High transportation costs for exports due to the remote location of Pacific Island countries is compounded by the high distribution and marketing costs. There is a heavy reliance in the region on external aid.

Pacific LDCs are highly vulnerable to significant external shocks both natural^x and man-made (financial crises) which in turn wields a considerable influence on their journey and transition to graduation. The most visible trade related implication for LDC graduation is the loss of preferential market access.^{xi} What implications this will have on a country’s revenue and trade system should be examined closely as Pacific LDCs move towards graduation. The preferential market system has presented a great learning curve for Pacific Island countries on the ‘how to’, while providing them better protection. The impact on a graduating country’s exports of losing preferential market access is determined by three main factors: (a) The coverage and structure of preferential schemes for which the LDC is currently eligible, but will cease to be eligible (possibly after transition period) as a result of graduation; (b) The product composition of exports and their distribution across markets; and (c) The fallback tariffs to which the country’s

exports will be subject to after graduation. Given the potential revenue losses to be incurred upon graduation, what timeline do these Pacific LDCs have before these preferential agreements cease?

The open market brings with it unique challenges for the region as free trade does not necessarily mean fair trade.^{xii} Thus, the transitional period is quite critical for LDCs. Japan for instance, has extended trading preferential access for Samoa to 2020. In addition, dual political instruments that define how trade is to be effected needs careful consideration as well. Tariff deductions demanded by an open market will mean a loss of revenue. How will governments make up for the loss of revenue? Taxation systems need to be carefully scrutinized during transition. In 2014 Kiribati had to adjust their customs duty, hence, it is critical to closely examine the financial sector in order to ascertain where taxes are being increased. What kind of conditions can LDCs demand if they are to lower trade barriers or thresholds? In Solomon Islands, it is fisheries, while in Vanuatu, it is remittances. Both Governments are looking into opening up the extractive industry for trade and CSOs will need to look closely at their economic areas of strength that may be affected.

Understanding regional trade agreements such as Pacer Plus is critical, if CSOs are to have some influence over it. Australia, New Zealand and Europe usually grant access to Trade Agreements once these are signed but not while negotiations are ongoing. It is imperative that CSOs have influence over trade agreements during negotiation stage as they represent communities.

High tariffs are a key source of government revenue and lowering these tariffs under Pacer Plus on Australian and New Zealand goods in particular, would mean significant revenue losses for Pacific Island countries. A post-graduation case study of Samoa to capture sustainable transition mechanisms and strategies to address preferential market access loss, would provide valuable lessons for Pacific LDCs that are still in transition to graduation.

Summary of discussions to above presentations

- PIFS as the most appropriate body, needs to address the need for simplifying or categorising information pertaining to trade agreements and technology transfer, given their technical complexities that cannot be easily explained or understood at community level.
- A trade-specific NGO should be set up to deal with trade issues, namely to scrutinize trade negotiations, identify the missing gaps in trade, and demystify trade agreements so that communities are able to understand the deals and decisions that are being made that have direct implications for their communities and quality of life.
- Umbrella NGOs need to explore their scope of work to address this need to initiate conversations on trade at community level and how to deal with it in concrete terms particularly, given that it is not a subject area that NGOs have traditionally work in.

SESSION 3: CLIMATE CHANGE, ADAPTATION, MITIGATION AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Ms. Makereta Waqavonovono and **Ms. Jenny Jiva** of the Pacific Islands Network on Climate Change (PICAN) presented on the Impacts of Climate Change, Loss and Damage, Perspectives from CoP23 and reflections on the roadmap to CoP24.

Climate Change is essentially the rise in temperature of the Earth's climate system observed over the last decades and is also known as 'global warming'. The impacts of climate change engendered by drastic shifts in weather patterns from the rising temperatures are largely due to human activities, key of which is the burning of fossil fuels.^{xiii} The increasingly harsh climate realities for low lying Pacific islands and atolls render them most vulnerable to facing the worst impacts of climate change. Climate Change impacts not only geographical landscapes, such as loss of land from rising sea levels, but also agriculture, ecosystem, livelihoods, infrastructure and health, particularly affecting inhabitants of low-lying atolls in the Pacific region. Thus, Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu are the most globally at risk. Damage to coastal infrastructure, contamination of groundwater sources and loss of arable land for agriculture and livestock feeding, extreme heat stress on both man, plants and livestock, loss of marine and fishery stock, coastal bleaching, rising ocean temperatures causing intensively stronger cyclones are realities of climate change. Climate-induced displacement and migration is already the reality for pockets of populations in the Pacific. When mitigation is insufficient and adaptation measures to increase resilience becomes next to impossible, loss and damage ought to be considered.

Climate litigation is one way of holding to account those responsible particularly, the largest contributors to GHG emissions. There is ongoing discussion on launching a test case on climate change in Fiji. There is currently a Greenpeace case before the Philippines Human Rights Commission that can be used as persuasive precedence for the Fiji test case on climate change. The way forward suggested is to garner support for Pacific SIDS in loss and damage negotiations, within the UNFCCC^{xiv} processes for a proper and functional climate finance allocation. CoP23 held in Bonn, Germany late 2017 is touted "The Pacific CoP" since Fiji assumed Presidency over climate change negotiations – a first for the Pacific region that brings all Small Island Developing States (SIDS) into sharper focus, globally. Some of the key outcomes from CoP23 include the Paris Agreement Implementation Guidelines; the 2018 Talanoa Dialogue; Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, Gender Action Plan, Oceans and Loss and Damage. Some of the key policy moments scheduled for 2018 are: the Bonn Intersessional-Suva Expert Dialogue in May; Climate Action Pacific Partnerships (CAPP) meeting in July; California Summit in September; the IPCC^{xv} 1.5 report in October, pre-CoP meetings in November; and CoP24 in Poland in December 2018.

Dr. Scott Hook, Economic Infrastructure Adviser, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). Under the IPoA, climate change and disaster risk relate to several priority areas: infrastructure, agriculture and gender. PIFS aligns to these areas of concern about the exposure of LDCs to climate change. The criteria for graduation need to reflect LDCs vulnerability to climate change and disasters. Much of the focus of PIFS processes focus has been about linking the SDGs, Samoa Pathway, Paris Agreement and the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. In responding to the leaders' directives, the Pacific SDG Task Force identified 3 interlinked streams of work that need to be given equal attention and focus on how to deliver on those plans. Do we have enough and right financing? Do we have effective and strong institutions? Do we have the right capacities and statistical systems? Additionally, we also need to focus on accounting for those results. A key element of the roadmap is to understand and respond to the links between the national, regional and global levels and how what is planned and implemented is most effectively monitored.

The total climate finance in 2014 was USD392 billion. Of that, PICs received USD 748 million between 2010-2014^{xvi}. Between November 2015 to the present day, USD251m was approved for projects in seven PICs^{xvii}. At the regional level, there is still a lack of clarity on the available funding opportunities and how to access them – made difficult in the way many global climate funds are designed. The uneven resource distribution is also a challenge as climate finance is not evenly spread, creating barriers to access, particularly for smaller countries. There is a need to catalyze private finance as public finance alone is insufficient to meet demands of climate challenge. There is also a need for a better policy coherence between climate and development. In order to drive an economy-wide transformation in production and consumption, climate finance must be mainstreamed into planning and development policy.

The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) through the Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP), shapes regional support on climate change and disaster risk management financing. It provides three goals for the region: (1) Strengthened integrated adaptation and risk reduction to enhance resilience to climate change and disasters. This generally includes climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction activities; (2) Low carbon development (note that PICTs are low emitters there is no reduction target, but rather a guide for as we move forward with development to ensure it has a low carbon footprint; and (3) Strengthened disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Whilst the Regional Pacific NDC Hub can be directly related to Goal 2 of the FRDP, as per feedback the first day of this consultation – the impacts are not necessarily limited to low carbon development but should contribute to overall adaptation and increased preparedness at the national level.

Mr. John Connor – Executive Director of CoP23 Presidency Secretariat, reflected on events leading up to CoP23 in Bonn in late 2017, the outcomes and processes for the preparatory and

political phases leading up to CoP24. The outcomes for CoP23 were: gaining a Fiji momentum for the implementation of a Talanoa Dialogue, definitive guidelines for pre-2020 negotiations; an increased support for vulnerable communities, resilience global partnerships and providing a clearing house for risk transfer; Suva Dialogue on loss and damage; adaptation fund enhancement and its link to Paris Agreement; gender action plan; local communities and indigenous peoples platform; ocean pathway partnership and the Koronivia workplan on agriculture. In terms of the Pacific Outcomes from CoP23, there is a Talanoa Dialogue Portal to facilitate e-discussions and encourage all parties, stakeholders and expert institutions to provide analytical and relevant policy inputs. The design of the dialogue aims to enhance ambition. It also consists of a preparatory and a political phase and the presidencies of COP 23 and COP 24 will jointly lead both phases of the dialogue, providing inputs to inform the dialogue as well as co-chair the political phase at COP 24. There is also a dedicated space for Special Report by the IPCC on Global Warming of 1.5°C.

Summary of discussions to above presentations

- On Loss and Damage - a paradigm shift is needed to acknowledge or recognize non-economic loss, as this affects cultural identity and traditions which cannot be measured or compensated in monetary terms. This is an important consideration for Pacific LDCs to build momentum on, going forward to the upcoming regional CSO consultations. This was agreed to by the panelist presenter who acknowledged a disconnect between discussions at CoP23 negotiations and what was happening at ground level. There are plans underfoot to expand discussions at community level of non-economic losses. It is important to let the people tell their stories as putting a human face to loss & damage could bring home the significant impacts being felt at the community level. Raising awareness via platforms such as the Talanoa Dialogue on loss and damage is pivotal to building momentum to influence negotiations at country level. PIFS is working with SIDS to find new mechanisms to address loss and damage.
- A concern was raised about the shrinking space for CSOs on how to access climate financing, since international CSOs were moving into these spaces to also claim climate financing.
- There is also a need to refocus efforts on the people at community level, to acknowledge traditional systems, values and practices. While global-level discussions are useful, there is a need for traditional leaders to be able to access climate finance for purposes of rebuilding cyclone proof homes to the highest standard. This should be a vital part of National Action Plans in ensuring that the appropriate infrastructure is securely place.

SESSION 4: RENEWABLE ENERGY / FOOD SECURITY

Mr. Ifereimi Dau, Energy Programme Officer, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) introduced the work of IUCN particularly on renewable energy in terms of providing training at policy level (wind and hydro) and at grassroots level (hydro) in order to encourage inputs into regional and national policy developments. IUCN works with some Pacific LDCs namely, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. They have also organized environmental impact assessment regional workshops and drew up for Vanuatu an environmental management and monitoring plan for the Talise mini-hydro project^{xviii} in order to assist the local community manage the environmental impacts of their construction activities. They also play an active role in the Tonga Energy Road Map, the Fiji National Energy Policy review process, the Vanuatu Energy Road Map consultative meetings, Solomon Islands National Development Strategy consultative meetings and more recently, the Fiji Islands Green Growth Strategy consultative meetings. Participation in these meetings permitted IUCN to present a model of energy development that ensures environmental sustainability. The project concepts are designed by the countries, sometimes with the assistance of consultants, thus promoting local ownership. Further, these projects are implemented through National Government agencies and government systems, creating an additional layer of ownership. IUCN works collaboratively with regional institutions such as SPREP and SPC to deliver on these Energy, Ecosystems and Sustainable Livelihoods Initiatives (EESLI).

Mr. Leo Nainoka, Slow Food Network Specialist, Social Empowerment Education Programme (SEEP), reflected on the history of the idea of Slow Food which started with a group of activists in the 1980s with the initial aim to defend regional traditions, good food, gastronomic pleasure and a slower pace of life. Over time, the movement evolved to embrace a comprehensive approach to food that recognizes the strong connections between plate, planet, people, politics and culture. Today, Slow Food represents a global movement involving thousands of projects and millions of people in over 160 countries. Vanuatu already has a slow food movement whereas in Fiji as early as 2014, Slow Food was still a relatively new term. However, upon deeper reflection, this mirrored ancient traditional practices that have been forgotten in the quick march towards modernization. Our ancestors understood the land and practiced itswise utilization by consuming seasonal root crops, fruits and vegetables for instance. Hence, the concept of Slow Food is not new. It has always been what we think and believe is the right and healthy way of planting, harvesting and eating.

The effects of Globalization on our food production has become unhealthy due to massive usage of chemicals, pesticides and compounded by unsustainable practices on our land. Fiji's rate of NCDs for instance is very alarming. All types of serious ailments such as cancers and diabetes are closely linked to NCDs. Mission of Slow Food is to reintroduce Pacific communities, an island at a time to using tradition recipes and organic planting of food. Exchange of ideas on best practices and lessons learnt between Fiji and Vanuatu should be encouraged. Training young farmers on the Slow Food concept and the know-how on organic farming is already underway, as well as raising awareness by promoting Slow Food practices within organisations. In this regard, SEEP holds Slow Food lunches and invites stakeholders.

Summary of discussions to above presentations

- Agree with the drift from traditional practices of healthy eating and living and that were sustainable, to modernization practices of today in which both people and the environment lost out.
- Vanuatu's experience in promoting Slow Food is demonstrated by an increase in health policy in schools around the country that buy local products instead of junk food for kids to snack on. Market vendors sell a piece of Slow Food at cheap prices to encourage consumption of Slow Food while providing employment for villagers and subsistence farmers.^{xix}
- Slow Food is the answer to rising NCD statistics in Pacific island countries. Promotion of homegrown gardens and provision of seedling programmes to encourage Slow Food should be led at the national level.
- The idea of Wild Food is closely related to Slow Food, the former mitigating the effects of climate change at the community level. Need to broaden the conversation: linking Slow Food, Wild Food and climate change risks.
- The question of methods of cooking Slow Food is an issue. Majority of households use fuel to cook. Suggested that IUCN take up the issue of renewable energy such as biomass for households to use as fuel for cooking Slow Food.
- Need further reflection on finding the necessary links between trade, climate, renewable energy and food security. To what extent is trade for example, contributing to our development.

4.0 Day Two Plenary Sessions

SESSION 5: LDCs AND SUSTAINABLE GRADUATION

Ms. Rushka Sthapit, LDC Watch Programme Officer, introduced LDCs globally, by region and defined the intention behind this classification which was to attract the attention of international support to the most low-income developing countries that face severe structural impediments to growth. UN ECOSOC's Committee for Development Policy (CDP) is mandated to identify and recommend which countries should be included or removed from this category. CDP conducts triennial reviews whereby they decide on countries that are to be classified as LDCs and which LDCs are to be graduated to middle-income country status. Triennial reviews were conducted in 2012, 2015 and before the end of 2018. To be included in the LDC category, a country must fall below the 3-criterion threshold (income, human asset index and economic vulnerability index). To graduate out of the LDC category, a country must satisfy at least two of the three criteria in two triennial reviews; or alternatively, its GNI per capita must exceed twice the threshold level of the income criterion.

All five Pacific LDCs have met the graduation criteria by either meeting the income only threshold or a combination of income index and human asset index. However, the reason why graduation has been referred is the economic vulnerability index (EVI) which has been a major challenge in reducing to under 32. The EVI scores in Pacific LDCs are significantly higher than other LDCs in the Asia region. Kiribati has the highest EVI, followed by Timor Leste. In deconstructing the EVI, it was found that instability of export of goods and services is the single largest component accounting for 21% of the total EVI. Although EVI decreased over a decade ago, this progress was offset by an increase in remoteness and small size populations living in low-elevated regions exacerbated by an increasing intensity of natural disasters and climate change impacts.

In principle, graduation marks a point where the LDC is able to operate in and benefit from the international market, at an equal footing with other developing countries. It is understood that the country has made a transition from primary reliance on international support to international markets. However, graduation is not an end in itself, it marks the end of a political and administrative process but not the end of an economic and social development process. LDCs also have a say as to whether it is ready to graduate or not. Following graduation, the smooth transition strategy kicks in for period of up to nine years from the effective date of graduation. This essentially means that LDC specific support is phased out gradually and predictably, in order avoid disrupting the country's graduation process. However, not all trading partners have adopted policies to extend their support to transition periods. The sustained graduation of LDCs is largely dependent on the fulfillment of commitments of Development Partners. However, it is also dependent on national transition strategy that the country develops to take it through the transition process. By and large, LDC Watch notes that a systematic smooth transition process is not always practiced.

SESSION 6: LEARNINGS FROM SAMOA AS A RECENTLY GRADUATED COUNTRY

Ms. Roina Vavatau, President, Samoa Umbrella Association of Non-governmental organizations (SUNGO), reflected on the challenges that Samoa experienced post-graduation. The country had initially acceded to graduation in 2011 but this was delayed due to Tropical Cyclone Evans that devastated the country, delaying graduation until 2014. The Samoan community was however, not fully consulted about the process nor did it fully appreciate the implications of Samoa graduating from LDC to a middle-income country. Given the loss of benefits that the country had enjoyed under LDC status, Samoa had to look for sources of revenue to recover the revenue losses it incurred. Challenges mounted up almost overnight: calls for foreign investors increased; traditional lands were up for lease; the legal and regulatory framework were hastily adjusted to accommodate these changes; a citizen bill of one million citizens was introduced;

public utilities became privatized e.g. health, telecommunication, postal services, banks, energy companies; loss of national airline due to as debt level became unmanageable and taxpayers were footing the bills through their superannuation; there was an increase in taxation, even churches who as a tradition were not taxed, were not spared; NGOs were required to obtain a business license; there was an increase in Chinese migrant workers entering Samoa and assumed who took up local employments while the country's debt accumulation increased beyond an ability to repay the debt; there was a heavy reliance placed on the World Bank to develop infrastructure that further added to the national debt level; corruption and crime rates increased; the closure of car manufacturer Yazaki resulted in massive job losses for the 2000 employees and leaders became increasingly under pressure to sign the trade agreements that were not in the national interest.

A key lesson identified is the need to prepare the people for the drastic change of circumstances. A shift in mindset is needed in order to absorb the economic shocks that come with graduation and this means conducting full consultations and dialogues in order to prepare citizens on what to expect post-graduation. The entire Pacific region will remain most vulnerable to climate change; hence, graduation needs to be carefully considered. It is recommended that graduation be delayed for as long as possible. In hindsight, Samoa's continuing vulnerability to climate change ought to have been taken into account to delay the country's graduation. The extent of damage to food and water sources, land and the environment is very serious. In questioning whether there is a way to reverse the situation in her country, Ms. Vavatau supported the call for a proper case study to be conducted on Samoa, by perhaps PANG and the results shared at local level. LDC Watch can then advise on how to remedy the problems that will be highlighted in the case study.

Samoa's experiences painted a dreadful picture though CSO participants shared that Pacific LDCs have already started facing similar structural adjustment issues and are determined to rethink strategies to address these. There needs to be a win-win situation as the current disparity of power between the negotiating parties behind closed doors greatly affects the quality of trade deals. Pacific islanders are also already experiencing an increasing influx of Chinese workers that seemingly indicates that the Pacific LDCs have already graduated. The potential loss of traditional land to investors is real, through an introduced tenure system of land registration that if not carefully scrutinised, can effectively dispossess landowners of their traditional, ancestral land in the near future. CSOs need to urgently rethink and strategise as a group, ways to counter some of these heavy foreign influences that are already taking place. Some participants wondered about the purpose of LDC Watch given that graduation of Pacific LDCs does not make much sense, particularly in light of climate change that seasonally brings about dire consequence on the economy. Question asked is: is it the purpose for the big developed countries to take over barely surviving economies? The issue of labelling was also of

great concern to Pacific LDCs. The term “LDC” already has a negative connotation compounded by graduation into a category which Pacific Island countries are not ready for. Similarly, the term “SIDS” was suggested to be replaced with “Big Ocean States” – a term that recognises the vast EEZ that each Pacific Island country possesses as part of its sovereignty.

Summary of discussions to above presentations

- Broad agreement by delegates who already share similar experiences and are not keen to graduate given the loss of fiscal support and uncertainties over the sustainability of graduation.
- There is difficulty in unpacking the meaning of “non-economic loss” as this term is unable to measure losses to land, to culture, to language and certain traditions, in purely monetary terms. However, it is critical that these losses are compensated for in some way as these setbacks are being experienced due to climate change.

SESSION 7: COUNTRY STATUS UPDATES BY PARTICIPANTS

CSO representatives from Pacific LDCs: Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu presented their country reports summarized as follows:

Kiribati has worked hard to meet the graduation criteria. However, ground realities indicate ongoing steep challenges that will be more difficult to overcome with graduation. Their increased vulnerability as an atoll to climate change - from rising sea levels, erosion of coastal land to contaminated water sources continues to challenge the economic criterion. KANGO as the CSO umbrella body is presently undergoing structural review and institutional strengthening to enable a more effective community engagement and help to mobilise a more robust response to the continuing challenges faced as an LDC.

Solomon Islands GDP growth rates is still below the National Development Strategy (NDS) targets. Human development index (HDI) has hardly improved with the country ranking behind PNG, FSM, Kiribati and Vanuatu as the country strives to reach medium human development capacity by 2020. There appears to be little improvement in the health sector and insufficient progress in exploring measures to improve disaster and climate change risk management. While small improvements have been made in tourism; transportation and infrastructure remain a key challenge to stimulating economic activity. Data is also an issue and access to these remain limited and therefore, an impediment to planning and monitoring of progress to enable effective policy influencing. Governance could be better improved through strategic elimination of corruption and political will is required. Security remains fragile as peace and order remain critical to restore investor confidence. CSOs are characteristically people-oriented and DSE

recognizes the need to better translate decisions and technical information that affects the community, LDC criteria and trade issues and agreements that are closely linked to LDC graduation. DSW welcomes a strong outcome declaration that will amplify the need for more work to be done in raise awareness on LDCs and ensure access to public space to have community dialogues.

Tuvalu as a low-lying atoll evidently presents specific, fundamental challenges given its isolation, remoteness, absence of natural land-based resources (poor quality of land which is sandy and flat. There is a heavy reliance on imports as productive capacity remains limited. Some agriculture and fisheries are mainly subsistence. Transport is extremely costly. Air travel from Tuvalu has always been through Fiji and only recently, Air Kiribati have begun an alternative route out of Tuvalu that brings down airfares although the reduction is not substantial. TANGO as CSO umbrella body views the LDC criteria for graduation with grave concern as graduation to the middle-income country category will not reflect the ground realities, at least in the case of Tuvalu who remains vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in the foreseeable future. There is a need for new statistical measures which are more appropriate for analyzing the LDCs and SIDs realities, vulnerabilities and resilience. Given Tuvalu's limited income generating options, Tuvalu will need access to LDC fund, climate change and other specific donor funding and other resources earmarked for LDCs particularly while the country is waiting for its Trust Fund to recover. The issue of climate-induced migration will need to be addressed carefully given the sensitivities surrounding it. The wishes and dignity of the people of Tuvalu needs to be upheld and respected at all times in such dialogues on climate migration.

Vanuatu is earmarked to graduate in 2020 and has in place a national strategy to prepare for graduation. Vanuatu 2030 is the National Sustainable Development Plan 2016 - 2030 (NSDP) to guide development towards a smooth transition in 2020. VANGO as a key CSO umbrella observed that at the beginning phase of NSDP, wider consultations were held with the CSO community with VANGO at the forefront of discussions, assisting to develop the draft NSDP but as time progressed, consultations ceased and they have been kept in the dark particularly, in coming in the implementing and monitoring stages. The transition phases of development towards graduation lacks CSO input. Of NSDP's three pillars: society, environment and economic - it is the economic pillar that is at most risk. Under the social pillar, the only target at risk is the "Under 5 mortality rates" which indicates access to health centres and support particularly, for those outside the two-main urban centres remain a key challenge. In trade, the MSG Free Trade is broadly viewed as not working well in Vanuatu's favour and instead, is heavily slanted towards Australia and New Zealand's favour. There is call for Vanuatu's developed neighbours to review their migration policies so as to enable Vanuatu's citizens to access other job opportunities apart from the RSE programmes. Under the economic pillar, Vanuatu must consider reviewing the Decentralisation Act to ensure that communities are financially

equipped to establish and manage their community-based projects using the CDD initiative. Lack of financial capitals for small scale farmers to take their agri-businesses further i.e. to meet regional/international market requirements remain a key impediment. Development partners and in particular, EU/NSA must consider funding local initiatives such as establishment of food processing laboratories and value-added strategies, such as quality packaging. There is a need to strengthen the PPP Initiative (Public Private Partnership) in order to make NSDP everybody's business. VANGO is awaiting the Government to financially assist its strategic plans to support its implementation of the NSDP as a community-driven development.

SESSION 8: ADOPTION OF DECLARATION

A draft declaration was discussed and deliberated at length by the participants and was finalized a few days later. A copy of the finalised Declaration is annexed in the Appendix, marked as Schedule A.

6.0 Appendix

Schedule A

Regional Consultation of Pacific LDCs' Civil Society Organisations: Reviewing Key Issues of Pacific LDCs and the achievement of IPoA and SDGs

**Suva, Fiji
14-15 March, 2018**

Declaration

We, the representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the Pacific region^{xx} – Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu who met in Suva, Fiji, from 14-15 March 2018, to review the key issues of Pacific LDCs and the linkages and achievement of Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The meeting deliberated on the development challenges faced by Pacific LDCs and their graduation from LDC category with lessons from Samoa's graduation experience, updates from each country and presentations from regional and development partners^{xxi}. We discussed the need for synergy and coherence between IPoA and SDGs to reach the full potential of sustainable development in the Pacific LDCs, as agreed in Istanbul Programmes of Action (IPoA) for LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020^{xxii}. The five key themes covered in the Consultation were: i) Climate Change, Adaptation and International Support; ii) Trade, Technology Transfer and International Support; iii) Energy Security and Access to Sustainable Energy; iv) Food Security and Food Sovereignty; v) Sustainable Graduation. We recognise broadly the significance of a human rights-based approach that undergird these thematic discussions. Our deliberations on these issues have resulted in the following declaration.

Climate Change, Adaptation, Mitigation and International Support

1. Least Developed Countries in the Pacific include other island countries that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and therefore, recognise the urgent need for financial and technical support from the developed countries and development partners to enable Pacific LDCs achieve their targeted national development goals. We strongly urge development partners to fulfil their commitments of USD 100 billion annually by 2020 through the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility, Least Development Country Facility and other funds disbursed through global and bilateral programmes that go towards addressing these targeted national development goals.
2. We reiterate strongly the call to keep the limits on climate warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius as agreed in the Paris Agreement and call for a smooth and speedy implementation of the Paris Agreement and implementation of the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and explore renewable energy sources.

Loss and Damage has been a huge consequence of climate change in Pacific LDCs as well as for the entire Pacific region as it includes the loss of identity, culture, traditional values, indigenous institutions and issues of sovereignty that have not been accounted for. We call for the reinstatement of loss and damage as an integral part of the Paris Agreement and urge the adoption of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform^{xxiii} and Gender Action Plan^{xxiv} as national governance initiatives.

3. Climate -induced displacement and migration is on the rise in the LDCs in the Pacific region. Recognising that migration can increase resilience to crisis and strengthen capacity to cope with future impacts of climate change, we call for a comprehensive climate risk management strategy that includes options for mobility. We further call for the protection of human rights of climate migrants in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and which will be adopted by the UN in December 2018.

Food Security and Food Sovereignty

4. Food insecurity in Pacific LDCs is increasingly compounded by climate change. Public procurement and public stockholding are invaluable instrumentalities to sustain the food security programmes in LDCs because it not only ensures cheap subsidised food made available to the urban and rural poor but it also guarantees a price-support mechanism to subsistence and small scale, poorly resourced farmers. This should not come under any kind of restriction. There needs to be an increased support for local initiatives such as value-adding in fisheries exports as identified by Pacific leaders that will increase food export levels. Furthermore, the re-emergence of the slow food movement, a long-held tradition in the Pacific which recognises healthy food consumption and organic sustainable agriculture as a key strategy to help reduce the high levels of Non-Communicable Diseases prevalent in the Pacific LDCs and the region as a whole.

5. We condemn the erosion of traditional and time-tested land tenure systems - critical to enhancing food security and preventing environmental degradation; and the imposition of land registration systems slanted towards accommodating foreign investment demands at the expense of traditional landownership which has evidently led to land grabbing.

Trade and Technology Transfers and Sustainable Graduation

6. All trade distorting measures in agriculture within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) framework are to be urgently rectified in order to protect the vulnerability of farmers from unfair trade systems.^{xxv} Access to information must include appropriate translation of technical information for Pacific LDCs to understand, engage and inform all trade negotiations, which at highest level, is notably characterised by a power imbalance between the negotiating parties. In addition, WTO must ensure the smooth and sustainable transition of countries graduating from LDC category: the measures and benefits associated with LDC membership status is to be phased out gradually and consistent with their smooth transition strategy, bearing in mind each country's particular development situation.

7. We call on all concerned to promptly invoke and implement the exemptions granted under intellectual property rights regimes under the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. We hope that the Intellectual Property Bank will support Pacific LDCs in building national intellectual property and facilitation of technology transfer. We further hope that the Technology Bank dedicated for LDCs^{xxvi} will spur innovation required to build productive capacity.

8. We recognise the criterion of economic vulnerability as the common obstacle faced by Pacific LDCs, deferring their graduation. We welcome a renewed focus on this criterion through the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR) which *inter alia* promotes peace and security in the region and ensures a deeper cooperation that will assist Pacific LDCs secure fair trade and eliminate non-trade barriers and distortions. We also recognise enhancing regional cooperation by invoking regional mechanisms to address climate change, adaptation and international support; trade, technology transfer and international support; energy security and access to sustainable energy; food security and food sovereignty; and the sustainable graduation of Pacific LDCs to middle income countries. We therefore call upon all LDC governments to reaffirm their commitment to multilateral trading system with an emphasis on the need for a speedy and successful conclusion of the ongoing Doha round of trade negotiations for their development concerns.

We urge the Pacific LDCs' governments and the development partners to review the graduation process and criteria by developing a national strategy and time-bound, result-oriented guidelines for sustainable graduation from the LDC category. The development process corresponding to each criterion should be viewed in a comprehensive and holistic manner taking into account the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Samoa Pathway, Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction and Paris Climate Accord, as indicated by the Mid-Term Review of the IPoA in 2016.

9. We recognise putting in place good governance practices and mechanisms to reduce and eliminate corruption, undisputedly a key cause of under development in the region. We call on the Pacific Island States to step up measures to eliminate corruption by firmly embedding good governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights, enhancing an equitable, participatory democracy in the region that will secure full realization of national development goals.

10. CSOs remain an integral and independent development partners in their own right. We therefore call on our governments and development partners to increase policy space that enhances effective CSO participation and decision-making in national, regional and international development processes. We urge our governments to integrate and align graduation strategy into the national development plans. We ask the development partners to ensure accountability vis-à-vis their responsibility and commitment under IPoA. We will continue to engage in monitoring the follow-up and implementation of the IPoA and the SDGs as well as ensure that global

processes such as the Agenda 2030, UNFCCC agreements, and WTO negotiations, are in the best interests of the LDCs and its people.

11. We conclude by extending our sincere thanks and appreciation to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the organiser LDC Watch, the local host Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisation (PIANGO), the and fellow participants for their contribution to the success of this Regional Consultation.

Schedule B

PROGRAMME

Regional Consultation of Pacific LDCs' Civil Society Organisations: Reviewing Key Issues of Pacific LDCs and the achievement of IPoA and SDGs

Day 1, Wednesday 14 March

8.30am Registration

9am Welcome by *Ms. Emele Duituturaga*, PIANGO Executive Director

Opening Session Statement - *Mr. Gauri Pradhan*
LDC Watch Global Coordinator

Keynote Presentation – *Mr. Josefa Maiava*, Head of Office, UNESCAP Pacific Office

Introductions and opening statements from Country delegations

10am *Morning Tea – Group Photo*

**SESSION 1: OVERVIEW OF ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION
AND 10.30am FOLLOW UP PROGRAMMES**

Mr. Gauri Pradhan, LDC Watch Global Coordinator

**SESSION 2: TRADE, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND INTERNATIONAL
11.00am SUPPORT**

Presentation from PIFS: *Ms. Veniana Qalo*, Trade Policy Adviser

Presentation from PANG: *Ms. Maureen Penjueli*, Coordinator

Discussions

12.30pm *Lunch*

**SESSION 3 : CLIMATE CHANGE, ADAPTATION, MITIGATION
AND 1.30pm INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT**

Presentation from PIFS: *Dr. Scott Hook*, Economic Infrastructure Adviser

Presentation from PICAN – *Ms. Jenny Jiva*, Policy Officer; *Ms. Makereta Waqavonovono*, Technical Adviser; COP 23 Secretariat

Discussions

3.00pm **SESSION 4: RENEWABLE ENERGY / FOOD SECURITY**

Presentations from Fiji Ministry of Health – *Dr. Tukana* (NCDs)

Presentation from SEEP – Slow Food Movement – *Mr. Leo Nainoka*

Group Discussion

4.30pm **Close of Day 1**

	Day 2, Thursday 15 March 2018
8.30am	Registration
9.00am	SESSION 5: LDCs AND SUSTAINABLE GRADUATION
	Presentation by <i>Ms. Rushka Sthapit</i> LDC Watch Programme Officer
	SESSION 6: LEARNINGS FROM SAMOA AS A RECENTLY GRADUATED COUNTRY 9.30am
	Presentation by <i>Mrs. Roina Vavatau</i> , SUNGO President
	Discussion
10.30	<i>Morning Tea</i>
11.00	SESSION 7: Country Status Updates by Participants
	Kiribati – Kiribati Association of NGOs – <i>Mr. Amon Timan</i> Solomon Islands – Development Services Exchange; <i>Ms. Jennifer Wate</i> Tuvalu – Tuvalu Association of NGOs; <i>Mr. Maina Talia</i> Vanuatu – Vanuatu Association of NGOs; <i>Mr. Lai Sakita</i>
	Discussion
12.30	<i>Lunch</i>
2.00pm	Adoption of Declaration
4.00pm	End of Consultation
	Closing Remarks

Schedule C

List of Participants

NAME	ORGANISATION
Inia Barry	DSFT, Solomon Islands
Roina Vavatau	SUNGO, Samoa
Sialel lolahia	PIANGO, Fiji
Rushka Sthapit	LDC Watch, Nepal
LusiBanuve	PIANGO, Fiji
Alisi Taukave	TANGO, Tuvalu
Gauri Pradhan	LDC Watch, Nepal
Wilfred Luiramo	DSFT, Solomon Islands
Sione Leolahi	NUIANGO, Niue
Amon Tilman	KANGO, Kiribati
Jennifer Wate	DSFT, Solomon Islands
Anne Pakoa	VANGO, Vanuatu
Maina Talia	TANGO, Tuvalu
Lai Sakita	VANGO, Vanuatu
Harold Obed	VANGO, Vanuatu
Cema Bolabola	FCOSS, Fiji
Laisa Vereti	PDF, Fiji
Anthony Sade	USP post-graduate student, Fiji
Anna Naupa	UNESCAP, Fiji
Kameli Tikoitoga	PIANGO, Fiji
Josaia Osbourne	PIANGO, Fiji
Mataiti	KANGO, Kiribati
Iosefa Maiava	UNESCAP, Fiji
Emele Duituturaga	PIANGO, Fiji
Luke Clole	USP post-graduate student, Fiji
Jerry Siuta	USP post-graduate student, Fiji
Ilaisa Naca	USP post-graduate student, Fiji
Veniana Qalo	PIFS, Fiji
Henry Bill	USP post-graduate student, Fiji
Maureen Penjueli	PANG, Fiji
Leo Nainoka	SEEP, Fiji
Ifereimi Dau	IUCN, Fiji
John Connor	CoP23 Presidency Secretariat, Fiji

George Hora'au	Researcher USP, Fiji
Scott Hook	PIFS, Fiji
Ekta Singh	PIANGO, Fiji
MakeretaWaqavonovono	Consultant PICAN, Fiji
Genevieve Jiva	PICAN, Fiji
Resina Senikuraciri	PIANGO, Fiji

ⁱThe Mid-Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) in May 2016, reviewed progress made on the path to sustainable development as set out in the IPoA for the LDCs. Challenges and opportunities were discussed and recommendations for the next five years of implementation were made. LDC Watch simultaneously held the Civil Society Forum during the Mid-Term Review wherein LDCs' civil society representatives gathered to discuss developmental issues that continue to plague LDCs. The CSO Forum culminated with the adoption of the Civil Society Declaration.

ⁱⁱ The Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a subsidiary body of the UN Economic and Social Council, is mandated to review the category of LDCs every 3 years and monitor their progress after graduation from the category.

ⁱⁱⁱ Conceptual framework between SDGs and peaceful, inclusive society. For instance, the need to develop a culture of peace in education as represented by SDG4. Similarly, SDG5 which is to promote gender equality.

^{iv} LDC Watch was established in 1971 by the UN General Assembly to focus on special development. Further, LDC Watch is essentially a platform representing civil society organisations at the national, regional and global level – to advocate, campaign and network for the implementation of the IPoA, SDGs and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals.

^v This succeeded the Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs (BPoA) for the Decade 2001-2010, adopted at the Third UN Conference on the LDCs in Brussels, Belgium, 2001.

^{vi} Timor Leste is not included in this discussion.

^{vii} Conducted jointly by USP and PIFS.

^{viii} Essentially the removal of restrictions or barriers including the movement of good and services by persons between jurisdictions.

^{ix} Article 11 (Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade - TBT); Annex II on Domestic Support etc. (Agreement on Agriculture); Article 9 (Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures; Articles IV, XIX and GATS Annex on Telecommunication (General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS); Articles 7, 8, 40 and 66 (Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

^x Increasing Category 5 cyclones.

^{xi} According to UNCTAD research, the potential impact of losing LDC specific trade preferences is estimated @ \$4.2 billion annually for LDCs as a whole.

^{xii} Fair Trade does not include reciprocal arrangements between trading countries.

^{xiii} Coal, oil, gas and massive deforestation release carbon gases that form a layer above the earth. These Greenhouse Gases (GHG) released into the atmosphere cannot be absorbed by the natural environment and over decades, has led to the rapid warming of the planet Earth which has caused havoc with global weather patterns.

^{xiv} United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

^{xv} Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) established in 1988 and tasked with summarising all scientific data on climate change to inform the policy decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

^{xvi} This figure shows the scale of contributions from different bilateral and multilateral sources (21 in total), and how climate finance has been distributed among PICs. Australia is the largest bilateral contributor (and the largest overall source), followed by Japan, the European Union, New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates. Among the multilateral funds, the largest contribution as of end of 2014 was a total of US\$131 million from the GEF, through a combination of its Trust Fund (focused on mitigation) and Least Developed Countries Fund (focused on adaptation). This also made the GEF the second largest source overall, after Australia.

^{xvii} FSM, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Nauru, Kiribati, Palau, Niue.

^{xviii} Upon the completion of the electricity network of the Talise hydro project, communities will have the opportunity to use the available electricity for income generation activities such as cold storage for seafood, root crops, handicraft workshops, small retail shops, boarding houses for tourists, etc. An institutional management

structure has also been set up with training provided to selected locals, to enable them to manage and run the hydro scheme.

^{xix}The downside of this is that Slow Food in general is becoming more expensive than groceries in stores. Given economic hardships, sometimes people do not have a choice but to resort to the grocery store in order to be able to have enough food for a big family for instance. A way to counter the rising cost of Slow Food was to utilize seasonal fruits and vegetables as these are usually plentiful and reasonably priced.

^{xx} Also present were CSO representatives from Fiji, Niue, Tonga and Samoa

^{xxi} Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), UNESCAP Pacific Office, CoP23 Secretariat, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Pacific Islands Network on Climate Change (PICAN), Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), Social Empowerment Education Programme (SEEP).

^{xxii} Adopted in 2011 during the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs (UN LDC-IV) in Istanbul, Turkey

^{xxiii} The LC & IPs Platform – acknowledges indigenous relational knowledge about their ecosystems which is retained through the generations and which they have and can draw upon to combat, mitigate and create resilience to the impacts of climate change.

^{xxiv} Gender Action Plan (GAP) is intended to advance women's full, equal and meaningful participation and promote gender-responsive climate policy and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Convention.

^{xxv} The timely implementation of duty-free quota-free (DFQF) market access on a lasting basis is important as it reaffirms the provision of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) for LDCs. Within SDT, it should be easy for LDCs to invoke Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM), an instrument that allows curbing of unforeseen surges in the import of agriculture products from heavily subsidised countries in the North. Further, LDCs should have enough flexibility to designate appropriate number of products as Special Products and make these products eligible to flexible treatment. Specific attention to foreign investment policies in countries in the areas where customary land is considered a key 'barrier to trade' especially in the emerging minerals extraction industry.

^{xxvi} Established by the United Nations and operationalised in September 2017.