



ISLAND DISPATCH

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USAID PARTICIPATES IN THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

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Acting Office Director for USAID/Pacific Islands Dan Miller and Environment Officer for USAID/Philippines and Pacific Islands Dani Newcomb will join the U.S. Delegation to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's (SPC) Eighth Conference of the Pacific Community (CPC) in Suva, Fiji from Nov 18-19, 2013. The U.S. Delegation will be led by David Atkinson-Deputy Director, Department of State EAP/ANP. Other members of the delegation include: Jeff Robertson-Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy Suva; Jason Brenden - Regional Environmental Officer, Embassy Suva; Ellen Connorton-Science Advisor, Department of State EAP/ANP; Agata Malek-International Relations Officer, Department of State IO/PRF.

The objectives of the conference include a thematic discussion on enhancing sustainable development in Pacific communities that will help shape the post-2015 agenda, and appointment of the new Director General of SPC.

USAID supports SPC through a 4-year project that strengthens food security among farming communities by: (1) building scientific and technical capacity to apply Geographic Information System (GIS) land-use, forestry and soil-mapping techniques and (2) implementing innovative techniques and management approaches to increase the climate resilience of terrestrial food production systems.

THREE NEW USAID PROJECTS ANNOUNCED AT THE 2013 PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM



Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell delivers the U.S. message at the 2013 Pacific Islands Forum. At right, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Marshall Islands, Amb. Thomas Armbruster.

The United States announced three new USAID projects at the 2013 Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) to help Pacific Island nations address key challenges, including climate change, disaster risk and gender inequality.

U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell led the U.S. government delegation at the PIF's Post Forum Dialogue held in the Marshall Islands on September 6. As the first ever Interior Secretary to attend the PIF, Secretary Jewell's visit demonstrated the United States' strong commitment to partnering with the Pacific Island nations.

After participating in the post-forum dialogue, Secretary Jewell and members of the U.S. delegation attended bilateral meetings with some of our closest partners in the Pacific.



Emphasizing the importance of the region, Secretary Jewell said, "This Administration has made a smart and strategic commitment to rebalance our interests and investments in the Asia-Pacific region. President Obama recognizes that this is a vast and dynamic region, a key driver of global and economic politics and a vital economic and strategic partner. He knows and cares about your

countries and is serious about working with you on issues of mutual interest."

With this year's PIF focusing on climate change, Secretary Jewell highlighted USAID's Pacific American Climate Fund, a new \$24 million project that will provide and monitor grants for climate change adaptation measures to qualifying sub-grantees.

"Climate change is the defining challenge of our time," she said when announcing the new USAID project. The Pacific American Climate Fund will support Pacific Island nations reduce long-term vulnerabilities associated with climate change, achieve sustainable climate-resilient community-level development, and provide USAID a platform to fund adaptation measures in the Pacific.

USAID's Environment, Energy and Climate Change Acting Director for the Philippines and Pacific Islands, Mr. Joseph Foltz, and Reconstruction Assistance Coordinator for the Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands, Dr. Muhammad Khan, joined the U.S. inter-agency delegation at the PIF. Both USAID representatives participated in various bilateral meetings with Pacific Island nations to ensure that

USAID programs are tailored to meet local priorities and needs.

Other new USAID projects announced at the PIF were the Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response (PREPARE) project and the Women Peace Building Initiatives in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. Subject to the availability of funds, \$4.5 million over five years will be provided for PREPARE to strengthen disaster preparedness and expedite delivery of appropriate emergency and reconstruction assistance in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Women Peace Building Initiatives in Bougainville is supported by \$1.5 million from USAID's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Incentive Fund to strengthen prospects for peace and security through the empowerment and protection of women and girls.

Since the PIF, USAID awarded the Pacific-American Climate Fund to Partners for Global Research and Development and the Women Peace Building Initiatives to Counterpart International. Both implementing partners are now gearing up for mobilization.

ENHANCED US-NEW ZEALAND PARTNERSHIP TO CLEAN ENERGY IN THE PACIFIC REGION

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Pacific Vocational Training and Education for Clean Energy (VOCTEC) Program has received a USD \$394,000-grant contribution from New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT) to expand the existing two-year program in the Pacific Islands.

Arizona State University's (ASU) College of Technology and Innovation is leading the implementation of the VOCTEC Program, which is designed to help improve the sustainability of renewable energy investments and infrastruc-

ture in the Pacific region by increasing local awareness, knowledge and capacity in clean energy.

New Zealand's contribution will be used to create and deliver solar energy equipment training in the region and to train additional trainers and technicians in up to five Pacific Island countries in the coming year.

USAID/Pacific Islands Mission Director Gloria D. Steele said, "The U.S. Government is pleased to work with the New Zealand Government for the advancement of clean energy in the Pacific Islands. The VOCTEC program supports



Students working through a hands-on exercise during training with Fiji National University in Labasa, Fiji.

our overall objective to address the negative impacts of climate change in the Pacific region by increasing access to

renewable energy.”

“With the support of USAID and NZ MFAT, we can continue to build local capacity to strengthen the sustainability of renewable energy investments in the Pacific Islands,” said Mitzi Montoya, Dean and Vice Provost of ASU’s College of Technology and Innovation.

VOCTEC has already conducted one train the trainer session with participants from five partner institutions - University of the South Pacific, Vanuatu Institute of

Technology, Solomon Islands National University, Tonga Institute of Science and Technology and Fiji National University. VOCTEC held subsequent technician training sessions in Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and two sessions in Fiji. A

total of 76 technicians were trained across these locations.

While VOCTEC has already made significant headway, this new funding from New Zealand will strengthen monitoring efforts to ensure that best practices are captured for future trainings in the region. The countries targeted for the second round of training are Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Papua New Guinea (PNG), and Palau. PNG is in desperate need of solar training service, as it has the lowest electrification rate, with approximately 6 million (out of 7 million) citizens without access to electricity. In PNG, VOCTEC is partnering with the University of Technology.



Students doing hands on practice on solar PV outdoors at Tonga Institute of Science and Technology.

This partnership with New Zealand demonstrates USAID’s commitment to promote more efficient use of development resources by closely collaborating with other donors in the Pacific region.

NEW WASTE COLLECTION SYSTEM FOR KIRIBATI REACHES 50,000 PEOPLE

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and USAID are partnering to achieve a dramatic and sustained improvement to solid waste management on South Tarawa and Kiritimati Island, Kiribati. The Kiribati Solid Waste Management Initiative (SWMI) works with government agencies and the communities of South Tarawa and Kiritimati Island to increase the climate resilience of landfills and improve the capacity of local governments to manage collection, recycling and solid waste disposal programs.

The Republic of Kiribati, with a population of 100,000, is located in the central and western Pacific and consists of 33 low-lying atoll islands. Kiribati is particularly vulnerable to climate change, rising sea levels, and natural hazards. Most of the land is less than 3 meters above sea level and is exposed to periodic storm surges and droughts. South Tarawa in particular is at risk due to its high population concentration (60,000), largely uncontrolled coastal development, and associated environmental degradation.

Ineffective waste management in Kiribati is highly visible and has serious health, environmental, and economic implications. Traditional household practice uses old sacks and boxes for waste collection which creates uncontained waste, high collection costs and as a result high litter rates.



The Green Bag waste collection system reaches 50,000 people, previously without waste collection services.

The centerpiece of the SWMI is the set-up of an affordable household waste collection system on South Tarawa to reach those who have never had waste collection provided before. SWMI established a pre-paid garbage collection service where the price of the bag includes the cost of collection, which is a common practice in New Zealand. The system uses a plastic ‘Green Bag’ priced at 20¢, and the Green Bag collection truck only collects Green Bags. Because of SWMI, consistent compactor truck collection service has reached over 50,000 people on South Tarawa since April 2012. Analysis from household surveys shows 62% of households are using the Green Bag for all of their inorganic waste.

Another impact of the Green Bag campaign is the reduced percentage of organic waste in the landfill waste stream. Project surveys show that organic content of the



Over 150 vehicles are collected and stockpiled in remediated landfills.

Green Bags decreased from 30% after six months of system start-up to 7%. This compares with a historic rate of around 70% organic and 30% inorganic. The re-

duction of this magnitude in the organic stream is expected to result in significant savings in landfill space.

Another area of activity for SWMI is bulky waste removal of End-of-Life (EOL) vehicles which is a significant problem in Kiribati. Most cars are imported second hand from Japan and given the very corrosive atmosphere and lack of spare parts, vehicles that are ten years old at import often only last another couple of years. As they slowly deteriorate, they dump toxic materials – such as paint, heavy metals and oils – into the ground water. Targeting roadside

wrecks, SWMI has contributed to improvements in collection and processing of EOL vehicles. To date, over 150 wrecked vehicles have been collected, along with significant amounts of scrap deposited by the public.

As part of Phase II of the bulky waste removal project, SMWI is attempting an economically-viable export shipment of the scrap metal which has been collected and stockpiled. This will contribute to income generation for the Kiribati people, in addition to reduced pollution of the soil and groundwater.

USAID COUNTRY MOBILIZERS READY TO ENGAGE WITH PACIFIC ISLAND COMMUNITIES



L-R: Jerry Cole (Sr. Technical Advisor [Fiji]), Thomas Putunleta (CM Vanuatu), Isoa Korovulavula (Community Liaison Officer [Fiji]), Cecilia Amosa (CM Samoa), Isimel Tuembe (CM PNG), Reshmi Gupta (Finance/Admin Assist [Fiji]), Philemon Karema (Infrastructure Specialist [PNG]), Unaloto Puloka (CM Tonga), Teddy Fong (Community Liaison Specialist [Fiji]), Stephen Smith (COP [PNG]), Renee Stephens (Development Outreach Coordinator [PNG]), Semi Masilomani (CM Fiji), and Nick Hobgood (DCOP [Fiji]).

Not Pictured [PNG Staff]: Lynette Timba (Financial and Administrative Manager), Ezekiel Gora (Admin Assistant), Judy Parobe (Accountant), John Thomas (Subcontracts and Procurement Manager), Simon Mewa (Driver/Logistician).

Country Mobilizers (CMs) for Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu recently underwent extensive training and are now gearing up to expand USAID's Coastal Community Adaptation Project (C-CAP). As the project's country-level experts and representatives, CMs will be the face of C-CAP within each of the 120 participating communities. They are responsible for liaising with communities and local-level government representatives, facilitating and

documenting community workshops, conducting site surveys, and monitoring project activities. The language abilities, cultural savvy and local knowledge of the CMs enable the C-CAP project team to develop productive partnerships with the participating communities in each of their respective countries.

The project's first group of CMs gathered in Fiji for five days of project implementation training. They were trained to perform climate change vulnerability assessments, facilitate

community workshops, map community infrastructure and climate change risk using GPS units and Google Maps technology, and assist environmental reviews and monitoring and evaluation reporting.

C-CAP's Project Director, Stephen Smith, is proud to have the first five CMs on board, saying, "the CMs have an important job to do. They are the communities' primary point of contact for the project and it is up to them to ensure that the concerns and climate change adaptation priorities of communities are identified and communicated effectively." The University of South Pacific, C-CAP's partner, will soon begin recruiting CMs for Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu.

USAID/Pacific Islands talked with the CMs to discuss the training and their critical role in C-CAP's implementation.

What motivated you to become a CM?

Cecilia, CM for Samoa: "I see a great number of people in my community who are still not fully aware of the causes and impacts of climate change. Being a CM for USAID/C-CAP gives me the opportunity to help promote and increase the awareness of Samoan communities on the impacts of climate change and what they can do to adapt to these changes. I think I can make a difference in this role by contributing to the success of the project."

Thomas, CM for Vanuatu: "I have been lucky enough to be involved with climate change work previously. I am concerned about climate change and want to do something to help communities manage this issue. My home country, Vanuatu, is made up of many small islands experiencing the effects of sea level rise."

Isimel, CM for PNG: "I'm from a small island in Papua New Guinea and my background is in fisheries management. Sea level rise and coral bleaching will have a big impact on coastal communities that rely on their marine resources. I hope that my involvement in the project will help communities deal with these kinds of issues."

What did you find useful about the training?

'Unaloto, CM for Tonga: "Using GPS technology and doing climate change risk mapping is new for me. I was also very impressed with the practical part of the training. I enjoyed implementing what I had learnt."

Semi, CM for Fiji: "Now I feel ready to go into a community and perform my role effectively. I enjoyed hearing about the overarching goals of the project because I now have a clear idea of how the project components fit together."

What are you looking forward to doing in this role?

'Unaloto, CM for Tonga: "I look forward to working with vulnerable communities to help them identify what can be done to address their climate change challenges. I look forward to helping them come up with a better plan for the future."

Thomas, CM for Vanuatu: "I look forward to using the Infrastructure Prioritization Index (C-CAP's multi-criteria analysis tool designed to help communities identify their infrastructure priorities for adaptation). I think it provides communities with an effective and structured decision-making process that is more effective than just voting."

USAID-SUPPORTED HIV/AIDS MODEL IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA CITED AS HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY



Family Health International 360 staff making a presentation on integrated HIV/AIDS model to NACS management and staff.

The Government of Papua New Guinea completed the medium term review (MTR) of the National HIV Strategy (NHS) 2011 – 2015 in May 2013. The NHS provides the framework and strategy for the national

response for HIV & AIDS in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The MTR identified USAID's integrated HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment model as a high impact strategy for HIV response in PNG and called for the model to be replicated nationally. USAID has been partnering with Family Health International (FHI 360) to implement the successful model through local agencies in PNG's National Capital District and Madang.

The MTR recommended that the National AIDS Council Secretariat (NACS) and National Department of Health rethink 'prevention' and recognize that different components of HIV/AIDS prevention and service delivery (i.e. counseling and testing, prevention of parent-to-child transmission, services for sexually transmitted infection, condom

promotion and antiretroviral therapy) should be closely coordinated, linked and reinforced. Similarly condom promotion, distribution and use, particularly for most-at-risk-populations (MARPS), need to be closely linked to other services.

Upon invitation from NACS, FHI 360 made a formal presentation to

the group's senior staff to discuss major components of the USAID-supported HIV/AIDS model, its successes and lessons learned in PNG. Dr Moale Kariko, NACS Deputy Director for Care, Treatment and Support thanked Shiv Nair, Project Director and the FHI 360 team for helping them understand the integrated HIV/AIDS model.



International Organization for Migration trains RMI government staff on maintenance and repair of reverse osmosis machines.

USAID CONTINUES DROUGHT RELIEF IN MARSHALL ISLANDS

USAID, through implementing partner International Organization for Migration (IOM), has provided extensive water and food assistance to thirteen atolls in the northern Marshall Islands that have suffered from severe drought conditions. Water storage facilities ran out of stocks. Food crops were also reportedly devastated due to the prolonged drought. Long-term impacts are expected to remain even after rains return.

Since Ambassador Thomas Armbruster's announcement of the U.S. Government's \$100,000 in assistance on May 10, USAID has provided more than 570 hygiene kits, approximately 1,150 collapsible water containers filled with a total of 6,000 gallons of safe drinking water and 75 empty water containers, to 705 drought-affected families. USAID also turned over thirteen new solar-powered mobile reverse osmosis machines, with each machine having the capacity to produce 360 gallons of safe drinking water per day.

In addition to water interventions, USAID is providing six months of supplemental food assistance to severely-affected atolls. Three phases of food distribution (July, August and September) have already been completed. Food handover

and onward delivery to beneficiaries is managed by the local governments with support from civil society organization, Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI).

On Monday, August 12, 2013, Ambassador Armbruster traveled to the drought-affected atolls of Wotho, Lae and Ujae. The Ambassador and a delegation that included Mayors, council members, USAID and IOM, observed relief efforts and engaged with community members directly affected by the drought.



Community members in Namu assist with the unloading of food supplies.

USAID PARTNERS CELEBRATE WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

by Michelle Wittenberger

On Thursday June 6th 2013, USAID partners celebrated World Environment Day and Coral Triangle Day on Ela Beach, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG). USAID partners from the Mangrove Rehabilitation for Sustainably-Managed, Healthy Forests (MARSH) project and the Coastal Community Adaptation project (C-CAP) joined forces, setting up a display to highlight how the two projects are helping vulnerable communities adapt to the negative impacts of cli-

mate change. “We would like to bring greater attention to the increasingly urgent need for on the ground adaptation action and demonstrate how communities can increase their resilience to climate change,” explained Stephen Smith, C-CAP’s Project Director.

The event was opened by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, Hon. John Pundari, who emphasized the crucial role of a healthy environment for the future of PNG and the important role youth can play to ensure its protection. The opening was followed by the release of an illegally captured green turtle that the Department of Environment had recently confiscated. Pundari discouraged capturing and eating marine turtles illegally, asking the crowd “will you eat any turtle meat in the future, now that you have seen this beautiful living green turtle here on Ela Beach”, the crowd responded with a loud and vibrant “Noooo”.

Other activities organized during the celebration

included a beach clean-up by school children and displays by government officials and conservation partners.

World Environment Day is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and is celebrated every year on June 5th to raise global awareness of the need to take positive environmental action.

C-CAP Project Director Stephen Smith and MARSH Chief of Party Eric Verheij in front of the USAID project display.



NEW FACES WORKING WITH USAID/PACIFIC ISLANDS



Winston Bowman, USAID’s new Global Climate Change Advisor.

Winston Bowman is USAID’s new Global Climate Change Advisor for the Office of Environment, Energy, and Climate Change. He served as Acting Pacific Islands Office Director and will continue to support regional climate change projects in the Pacific Islands. He previously served as the Regional Environment Director at USAID’s Regional Development Mission in Bangkok (RDMA).

Prior to joining USAID in 2003, Winston worked as the Chief of Party for the EcoLinks Partnership Grants Program in Eastern Europe. This USAID-funded program was administered by the Institute of International Education and promoted market-based solutions to urban and industrial environmental problems in 21 countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics. Prior to that assignment, he was Deputy Director at the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), an independent organization supported by 26 governments, dedicated to promoting regional cooperation and networking among governments, civil society groups, and businesses in addressing environmental issues. Mr. Bowman also served as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in Hungary.

Winston received his undergraduate degree in International Relations from Claremont McKenna College and his MBA in International Management from the UCLA Anderson School of Management.



Dani Newcomb, USAID’s new Environment Officer.

Dani Newcomb is USAID’s new Environment Officer who will also support regional climate change projects in the Pacific. She will attend the Secretariat of the Pacific Community’s 43rd meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA 43) in Suva, Fiji.

Dani was previously with USAID/Guatemala working on sustainable forestry, biodiversity, and climate change programs. Before joining USAID, she was an environment Peace Corps volunteer in Mexico with the Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment and later worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on water quality monitoring related to the Acid Rain Program.

Dani holds a Bachelor’s degree in Environmental Science from the University of Michigan and a Master’s degree in Aquatic Ecology and Watershed Science from the University of Vermont.



USAID AND SPC CONDUCT TRAINING TO STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY IN FIJI

Students of Nagado Primary School transplanting climate resistant crops.

Through USAID support, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) provided seedling propagation and nursery management training to the village of Nagado in Nadi, Fiji. Nagado is a farming community where there are few economic opportunities in agriculture and many of the farming methods used are not sustainable. In addition, family nutrition is poor and unvaried, which leads to other health problems.

The SPC-USAID project aims to strengthen food security among farming communities by increasing the climate resilience of food production systems. One of the project phases is to establish community seedling nurseries followed by training in crop propagation, nursery management and pest and disease regimes.

In Nagado, the community nursery is located on the grounds of the Vaturu District School. Rusiata Saukuru, the school manager, says: "Right now, we do things collectively in the village through the church and the school. We have 27 acres of land to use (for farming on the school grounds). We've only been planting cassava and yams and doing them anyway we know. This is a new thing. It will provide sustainability for the community for the future and also educate the children about farming."

Nagado has more than 1000 people and 231 children enrolled in the school according to Josaia Degei, the Turaga ni Koro or village head. "The nursery will provide seedlings to the community. This place has a lot of sloping land and the training will help us use

this land so that it can be more productive for us," he says.

Men, women and children from the village attended the nursery training on June 27 to learn how to grow and transplant climate resistant seedlings and maintain the nursery, including management during cyclones. Pest and disease management was also discussed with an emphasis on the benefits of organic farming practices.

Four other communities in Nadi will also receive community nurseries and training through the project's operations in Korobebe, Naboutini, Narokorokoyawa and Koroiyaca.

Community nurseries and training will also be provided in Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu through the SPC USAID project.



FAREWELL

It is my deep honor to thank Dennis Wendel for his tremendous leadership and service to the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Over the last 18 months as USAID's Pacific Island Office Director, Dennis Wendel worked extensively throughout the Pacific region to support President Obama's rebalance to the Asia Pacific region. He worked tirelessly with the Pacific Islands team to establish the growing portfolio of climate change and HIV/AIDS programs. He supported our collaboration with other international and national partners on energy, with regional organizations on global climate

change and HIV/AIDS, and with some of our Embassies on disaster assistance. He worked with our colleagues at U.S. Embassies throughout much of the Pacific community in an effort to strengthen collaboration between USAID and these Embassies. I am also particularly grateful to Dennis for his work on democracy in Fiji and his recent success in securing the Government of Papua New Guinea's commitment to support the elimination of lymphatic filariasis in Papua New Guinea.

We will miss Dennis tremendously for his leadership, dedication, and enthusiasm to make a difference in the Pacific. Please join me in wishing Dennis and his family the very best.

Gloria D. Steele
USAID Mission Director
Philippines and the Pacific Islands

PACIFIC ISLANDS OVERVIEW

Pacific Island nations are among the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of global climate change, as well as being some of the least able to respond. USAID assistance covers 12 Pacific Island nations: Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The region is home to over 9 million people, major fisheries, coral reefs, and important tropical forests, and is vital to U.S. Security and regional interests. The islands are culturally diverse, with more than 1,000 languages spoken and national populations ranging from less than 10,000 to more than six million. The region's varied topography includes mountainous islands and low-lying coral atolls, some of which are only 15 feet above sea level.

USAID's Pacific Islands Office works with Pacific Island nations to address acute environmental issues and the potential negative effects resulting from global climate change. The office also currently manages a disaster mitigation, relief and reconstruction program in the Republic of Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, assists Papua New Guinea in building its capacity for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment, and is engaged in both Papua New Guinea and Fiji with support to elections and democratic processes. USAID works closely with Pacific Island governments, regional organizations, and bilateral and multilateral partners to ensure that its assistance yields the highest impact by incorporating lessons learned and best practices from around the world.



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