



Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (PFSD) & Capacity Building Workshop for Pacific SIDS

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Context of COVID-19 and the Voluntary National Reviews.

Hybrid Meeting Format (Set Location & Virtual)

**10-11 December 2020
Nadi, Fiji**

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic is already having a profound impact on the pursuit of sustainable development, particularly in developing countries and small island developing states (SIDSs). Important as it is to respond quickly and decisively, it is even more important to ensure that this crisis and the responses to it do not undermine the collective commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Pacific Governments are taking steps to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic, including through a ministerial statement issued by the Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting¹. The FEMM ministerial statement represents a collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic and it provides the enabling political environment and commitment in the Pacific to expedite assistance and cooperation between member countries in preparing for and responding to COVID-19.

The focus of the 2021 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) is "Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development". In line with its theme, the 2021 HLP will review SDGs 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's important to note as well that the ESCAP Commission theme for 2021 is "Building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia Pacific" which highlights the importance of regional cooperation in responding to COVID-19 and building back better through accelerated implementation of the SDGs.

¹ Refer to www.forumsec.org Statement issued on 12 August, 2020.



It is therefore important to recall even in the throes of the COVID 19 pandemic that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs remains the preeminent global vision and aspirations of all countries for the future of development. Furthermore, accelerating its implementation is the best way of building back better requiring comprehensive actions at the global, regional and national levels, as indicated in General Assembly Resolution 70/1 on Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The COVID-19 pandemic requires short-term responses as well as long-term durable sustainable development solutions.

The 2030 Agenda also has a robust follow-up and review process which can be harnessed to ensure that the implementation of SDGs is accelerated and the world is better prepared to minimize the impacts of and strengthen responses to future crises and shocks. Countries are encouraged to conduct voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to assess progress related to attaining the sustainable development goals nationally and to do so in the context of COVID-19 and other crises faced by the world like climate change. There is an increased interest by countries in following up on the VNRs, to realize their potential as a means to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and this needs to be accompanied by a keen interest to make them relevant to current/emerging issues and interests of non-government stakeholders.

Indeed, countries have identified - and reflected in their VNRs - a range of challenges and gaps in their implementation frameworks. These include the need to create ownership of the SDGs; promote meaningful stakeholder engagement and develop mechanisms for institutionalized consultation with civil society; integrate the SDGs into national sustainable development strategies and development plans; strengthen systems for data collection and analysis; and enhance national monitoring and evaluation systems.

Meeting Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (PFSD) has been convened since 2017 as a platform to voice and advocate for regional issues of concern and to build capacity for reviewing and implementing the SDGs. They provide governments, development partners, civil society, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders with unique opportunities to develop Pacific regional perspectives and discuss the review and implementation of SDGs, explore closer Pacific multi-stakeholder and regional networking and collaboration, strengthen capacities for improved SDG-aligned national planning, implementation and progress reviews, and exchange good practices to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The tailored capacity building workshop, which follows the PFSD, aims to build the capacity of countries in the Pacific region to review and implement the SDGs, including through lessons learned from the VNR process and COVID-19. It seeks to assist countries to implement solutions and address gaps that they themselves have identified in their VNRs as well as the ways in which countries need to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and fully implement the SDGs.



To achieve these objectives, the PFSD and Workshop will:

1. Discuss and enhance knowledge on COVID-19 impacts and socio-economic policy responses and the challenges they pose for the implementation of SDGs
2. Through peer learning and exchanges of national and regional experiences, identify gaps and potential national and regional responses and synergies for accelerating progress towards SDGs.
3. Build the capacity of countries in the Pacific region to implement SDG and national priorities in the context of COVID-19, including through briefings on the regional and global roles and processes for the follow-up and review of SDGs.

The outcome of the PFSD and Workshop will inform deliberations at the 8th APFSD (22-25 March 2021) through a summary of key issues and recommendations. The outcomes will also inform the Theme Study for the 77th Commission session on “Building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific”. These and related meeting documents will be sent to participants and will also be made available on the ESCAP Website.

Participants

By invitation:

1. Representatives from ESCAP member States in the Pacific;
2. National Planning and VNR focal points;
3. Representatives of UN, development partner and CROP organizations; and
4. Private sector and CSO representatives.

Further Information and Registration

The PFSD will take place in both a “set-location” and “virtual” modality from 10-11 December 2020. Detailed information can be found on the official web page: <https://www.unescap.org/events/pacific-forum-sustainable-development-2020>

All questions regarding the Pacific regional SDG Forum can be sent to: escap-pacific@un.org and copy to Patricia Momoivalu: momoivalu@un.org



TENTATIVE AGENDA

Day 1	Thursday 10 December 2020
8:00 – 8:30	Registration (for in-person participants)
8:30 – 9:00	<p>Opening</p> <p><i>Welcome remarks (possible names)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiji Govt Representative • UNRC - Fiji • SG PIFS <p>Housekeeping/Guidelines for Workshop</p>
9:00 – 10:30	<p>Session 1: PFSD - Key impacts of, and responses to, the COVID-19 pandemic and their implications on the implementation of the SDGs in the Pacific</p> <p>a) <u>Presentations (10 mins each) on the key impacts of, and responses to COVID19 and implications for SDGs implementation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from PIFS/CROP on the impact of, and responses to, COVID-19 in the Pacific (tbc) • Presentation from UNRCO/UNDP on “UN COVID-19 socio-economic recovery: UN Assessment and Responses” (tbc) <p>b) <u>Lead responses from Countries (5 mins each) on the impact of COVID 19 on the implementation of SDGs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiji (tbc) • Samoa (tbc) • Palau (tbc) <p>c) <u>Other country views (25 mins)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour-de-table - open the floor to the remaining countries present to provide their views on specific aspects of the impact of COVID-19 in their countries and across the Pacific region <p>d) <u>Contributions from CSOs (15 mins)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite views from Civil Society Organizations on the impact of COVID-19 in their countries and across the Pacific region in the area in which they work <p>e) <u>Contributions from Development Partners (15 mins)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite Development Partners to share their views on the impact of COVID-19 in their area of work



10:30 – 11:00	Morning Tea Break and Group Photo
11:00 – 11:45	<p>Session 2: Build back better through regional cooperation – economic recovery</p> <p>To mitigate against the economic contraction, job losses and a rise in poverty and inequalities due to COVID-19, governments in the Pacific have had to deploy billions of dollars for emergency health response and relief measures for households and firms. This session is an opportunity to look at how the response and relief measures of governments affect their ability to sustain the financing of recovery while accelerating the implementation of SDGs including through regional cooperation.</p> <p>a) <u>Presentation (15 mins)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations from ESCAP discussing building back better through Pacific regional cooperation from an economic recovery perspective <p>b) <u>Panel discussion (20 mins)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel discussion to receive the views of countries (x2) and development partners (x2) on the role of Pacific regional cooperation in economic recovery and financing. <p>Q & A</p>
11:45 – 13:00	<p>Session 3: Build back better through regional cooperation – connectivity and supply chain issues</p> <p>Pacific SIDS rely significantly to share in globalized trade and transport connectivity to help address national development needs and aspirations. Containment measures for the COVID-19 pandemic, however, have exposed vulnerabilities in supply chains and transport connectivity. Such costs have resulted in disruptions, including for essential items such as pharmaceutical products. This session provides an opportunity to look in-depth at the importance of “Connectivity” in the context of trade, transport and digital issues.</p> <p>a) <u>Presentation (15 mins)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations from ESCAP on research undertaken and planned towards a theme study for the 77th Commission in 2021 with a focus on “Restoring and strengthening supply chains and connectivity” <p>b) <u>Group work (45 mins)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will be split in to three groups to discuss specific thematic issues and report back. An introductory presentation on challenges and opportunities in the Pacific, in each respective thematic session will be provided by the group facilitator. Resource persons will facilitate discussion. Issues raised in the Session will inform ESCAP’s study to be presented at the 77th Commission session.



	<p>Key questions guiding discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trade: How have regional supply chains changed during COVID-19 and what issues will remain challenges for businesses post-COVID-19? How can government policies enable more integration in global supply chains?• Transport: What can be done to establish transport connectivity that is more resilient?• Digital Connectivity: How can ICT technologies better support countries of the Pacific in terms of trade in goods and services, and transport? <p>c) Feedback from Group Work (5 mins each)</p>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break
18:00 – 19:30	Cocktail/dinner function



Day 2	Friday 11 December 2020
8:30 – 9:00	<p>Session 4: Recap of Day 1, and Setting the Scene – Implementing the 2030 Development Agenda</p> <p>In preparation for Session 4 on Day Two, a summary of the key messages from Sessions 1-3 will be provided along with briefings on how these message will be channelled through the regional (Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development) and global (High Level Political Forum) processes for supporting improved implementation of the 2030 Agenda.</p> <p>a) <u>Presentations (10 mins each)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by ESCAP on process for channeling these messages and outcomes through the APFSD and beyond • Presentation by DESA on the role of the High-Level Political Forum <p>Q & A</p>
9:00 – 10:15	<p><i>Session 4.1: Overview of progress against the 2030 Agenda in the Pacific – kicking off the “Decade of Action”</i></p> <p>This session considers progress with SDG implementation in the Pacific region, and aims to enhance peer learning on the issues impacting implementation of the 2030 Agenda.</p> <p>a) <u>Presentations (10 mins each)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by ESCAP on key findings of the SDG Progress report 2020 • Presentation from PIFS/SPC on key findings from the Pacific Sustainable Development Biennial Report <p>b) <u>Lead responses from Countries (5-10 mins each)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tbc • tbc • tbc <p>To set the scene for the remaining sessions, selected countries will present progress to date, gaps and challenges faced during the SDG implementation process, and lessons learned and plans going forward.</p>



	<p>Guiding questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What sectors and thematic areas have made most progress at national level? 2. What processes/factors/actions were most effective? Why? 3. What sectors and thematic areas have proved most challenging to implement? Why? 4. What are the main capacity gaps identified? <p>c) Q & A</p>
<p>10:15 – 10:45</p>	<p>Tea Break</p>
<p>10:45 – 12:00</p>	<p><i>Session 4.2: Progressing implementation of the 2030 Agenda beyond a VNR – a tool to progress implementation of the 2030 Agenda</i></p> <p>The session will address the means to translate the findings of the VNRs into activities, plans and strategies. It will allow countries to share their experiences post-VNR phase, including follow up on the implementation of the VNR recommendations, challenges, and success stories.</p> <p>a) <u>Kick-off presentation (15 mins)</u> Making the most of the VNR: effective follow-up. Presentation by DESA on good practices in the follow-up to VNRs.</p> <p>b) <u>Panel discussion (10 mins each)</u> Countries present an overview of lessons learnt from undertaking a VNR, with focus on strategies implemented to progress the implementation post-VNR</p> <p><i>Guiding questions</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there specific actions identified in the VNR for supporting implementation of national development priorities and SDGs? 2. What challenges are faced in systematically following up on such actions in the VNRs? 3. How can lessons learned from the VNR be sustained and integrated into national development plans and strategies? <p>c) Q & A</p>
<p>12:00 – 13:00</p>	<p>Lunch Break</p>
<p>13:00 – 14:45</p>	<p><i>Session 4.3: Sharing good practices for enhancing means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda</i></p> <p>a) <u>Introductory presentation (15 mins)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Session will focus on practices that enhance national capacity, improve national systems, and strengthen the means to improve the



	<p>implementation of the 2030 agenda. An introductory presentation will discuss background, with a focus on stakeholder engagement, south-south cooperation and strengthening of M&E systems (which have featured in most VNRs prepared by Pacific member countries).</p> <p>b) <u>Group Work (1 hr)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants to split in to three groups to further discuss strategies to accelerate progress <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <p><i>Stakeholder engagement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are examples of actions and policies to engage local stakeholders in SDG implementation? <p><i>South-South Cooperation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC <p><i>M & E Frameworks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are good practices for strengthening M&E and reporting frameworks? <p>c) Feedback from Group Work (10 mins each)</p>
14:45 – 15:15	Tea Break
15:15 – 16:00	<p>Session 5: Synthesis and the way forward</p> <p>This session will take stock of the key messages and recommendations from the discussions in all sessions.</p> <p>Facilitator/ Rapporteur</p>
16:00 – 16:15	Closing remarks