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## UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

### *Meeting SDG6 in the Pacific: Challenges and Actions*

21 March 2023, 10 - 11 am, Fiji

Organized by:

Water Authority of Fiji (WAF)

Pacific Water and Wastewater Association (PWWA)

Ministry of Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport  
(MIMS) / Department of Water and Sewerage (DWS)

University of New South Wales (UNSW)

### **Background on the event**

This side event presented a summary of the challenges facing Pacific Island Countries and Territories, and the concrete actions that must be taken to meet SDG6. These challenges and actions were identified at the 6th Pacific Water and Wastewater Ministers Forum held in November 2022 in the Republic of Fiji. The official communique is available [here](#).

The forum provided the opportunity for government ministers to acknowledge that despite progress, particularly in data benchmarking and gender equity, diversity and inclusion, the region is collectively off track to meet SDG6 targets for universal access to safe water and sanitation.

### **Key Issues discussed**

Common obstacles faced by Pacific Island Countries and Territories to meeting SDG6 include:

- threats to water security including saline ingress and depletion of groundwater resources;
- degradation of catchments and pollution of surface waters;

- exposure and increased vulnerability to natural disasters, climate change and the COVID 19 pandemic,
- the retention of local technical expertise and human capacity; and
- critical gaps in data for planning and operational decisions.

### **Key recommendations for action**

In response to these challenges the ministers have identified four key actions

- greater collective participation of the water sector in dialogue on climate and disaster resilience;
- scaling up national and regional investment in science, infrastructure and local capacity to establish and maintain appropriate, sustainable and climate resilient WASH solutions;
- urgent action to provide access to the estimated 1.8million people living in the region without safe sanitation and hygiene; and
- investment to improve monitoring, regulation, treatment, reuse and safe disposal of wastewater.