

PIANGO February e-Update

1. Secretariat News

Graduate Diploma Programme - Pacific Advisory Committee meeting

The PIANGO Graduate Diploma Programme Pacific Advisory Committee meeting was held in Suva on the 2nd and 3th March. Bakanebo Tamaroa, Arieta Moceica and Eleni Tevi represented the Secretariat at the 2 day meeting. A total of 13 representative from the secretariat, NLUs and UNITEC attended the meeting. For more information and outcomes of the meeting email arieta@piango.net

PACMAS Stakeholder meeting

The first Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) stakeholders meeting was held in Tonga on the 14th of February. PIANGO Information Sharing Programme Manager was invited to represent civil societies in component seven of the project. For more information email katabwena@piango.net

PIANGO Strengthen Tuvalu NLU

Bakanebo Tamaroa attended a workshop from the 19th - 26th February organised by UNDP Pacific Center in Tuvalu as part of developing the strategic development plan for Tuvalu Association of Non Governmental Organizations (TANGO). The workshop was facilitated by Amelia Siamomua of UNDP Pacific Center. For more information email bakanebo@piango.net

NZAID/PIANGO meeting

The PIANGO management team met with Emma Dunlop-Bennet, the new NZAID Regional Manager replacing Dimitri Geidelberg. The NZAID team consisted of Emma Dunlop-Bennet, Dimitri Geidelberg and Ponipate Ravuka. The main topic of discussions were the orientation of the new Regional Manager and the continuing discussion on the financial agreement between NZAID and PIANGO. For more information email bakanebo@piango.net

PLP / PIANGO meeting

The AUSAID funded Pacific Leadership Programme which PIANGO is an implementing agency of held its first meeting with PIANGO on the 14th Feb at the Secretariat. PIANGO's Capacity Building Programme Manager Arieta Moceica led the PIANGO team and the focus of discussions on the continuing support for PIANGO through PLP. For more information email arieta@piango.net

PIANGO attends UPR training seminar

The 'Universal Periodic Review' (UPR) Training Seminar was hosted by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade and conducted in Auckland from 02 -04 February 2009. Although it was primarily aimed at providing capacity to government officials who had to present their countries' human rights report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, PIANGO was also invited based on the crucial contribution of NGOs they are to make towards the final Human Rights Report by way of a Stakeholders Report. For more information email itintaake@piango.net

2. Pacific NGO News

Kiribati - KANGO

17 February 2009: Kiribati provides flood assistance to Fiji

The Kiribati Government today handed just over \$59, 500 (approx US\$32,000) to Fiji's interim government as part of the island nation's flood assistance to Fiji. The assistance was presented to interim Prime Minister Commodore Frank Bainimarama by the Kiribati High Commissioner, Reteta Rimon. The assistance will go towards the Prime Minister's National Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund. Accepting the donation, Commodore Bainimarama conveyed his appreciation and gratitude to the

people of Kiribati through the Kiribati High Commissioner. Commodore Bainimarama said Kiribati and Fiji have deeply embedded historical, cultural and economic association. He added that the assistance from the Government and people of Kiribati will go a long way in the relief and rehabilitation efforts following the floods a month ago. "The contribution demonstrates the close and growing relationship Fiji has with the smaller islands in the Pacific who very much depend on Fiji given our location and transportation links," he said. Commodore Bainimarama said that Fiji will always stand ready to help her neighbours in any way possible as they have done for Fiji in this assistance. [More>](#)

Australia - ACFID

20 February 2009: Australian Government helps eye care in Pakistan

Earlier this week, The Fred Hollows Foundation released a statement welcoming the announcement by the Australian Foreign Minister, The Honourable Stephen Smith, of an additional \$5.2million in assistance from the Australian Government towards The Foundation's work in Pakistan. Mr. Smith made the announcement during a meeting with Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, in Islamabad on Monday 16 February.

Speaking in Islamabad, the Foundation's Country Manager for Pakistan, Dr Rubina Gillani, said the funds would assist them in helping Pakistan tackle childhood blindness, with the overarching goal of eliminating all avoidable blindness in the country by 2020.

[More>](#)

13 February 2009: ACFID Training (workshops, MIFs, seminars)

ACFID aims to deliver training programs that are of the most interest and relevance to member agencies. ACFID's training programs have been developed after comprehensive consultations across the sector and with the cooperation of AusAID. ACFID actively seeks out the most appropriate facilitators to present training activities and workshops in their areas of expertise. Any agency wishing to assist with the facilitation of training activities is asked to contact Renata Zanetti on 02 6281 9229. As a general rule ACFID's training activities will not be the standard activities offered by other training institutions. While some training topics will be repeated from year to year as a matter of necessity, each activity will be developed and tailored to provide personalised niche training opportunities which meet the expressed needs of member agencies. A major focus of ACFID's training programs is to develop ideas and concepts and to move issues forward within Australia's aid and development sector [More>](#)

12 February 2009: ACFID farewells Executive Director

After four years as ACFID's Executive Director, Paul O'Callaghan will be leaving in late March to take up the role of CEO at Reconciliation Australia. Paul would like to thank all those in the sector who have helped and advised him in the current role and wish them well for their work in 2009. He is looking forward to building stronger links between the aid and development sector and the work of Reconciliation Australia. ACFID's Office Bearers are undertaking a recruitment search for a new Executive Director. [More>](#)

06 February 2009: AusAid Media Release: OECD Review of Australia's Aid Program

An Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) review has praised the targeting and effectiveness of Australia's overseas aid program. The OECD review was presented to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith, today by the Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Eckhard Deutscher. The OECD review welcomes the Government's renewed commitment to reducing poverty, its promotion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its support for international agencies like the United Nations. [More>](#)

3. GDP Courses and Dates

To find out more about the GDP, the course timetable for 2009 is available on the [PIANGO website](#).

The Conference Room located at the PIANGO Secretariat in Nasese, Suva, is available for use by NGOs. The Conference Room will hold up to 15 people, is air conditioned with a whiteboard and has kitchen and bathroom facilities attached. For bookings, contact the PIANGO Secretariat on.

To apply for a place on these courses, please contact your local country contact:

Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS)

Email: fcoss@connect.com.fj

People applying from: Kiribati, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands. Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga and Fiji.

Katrina Juliet Esera-Take, Samoa Umbrella of NGOs (SUNGO)
Email: sungotraining@lesamoa.net
People applying from Fiji, Tonga, Niue and Samoa.

Emeline Siale Ilolahia, Civil Society Forum Tonga (CSFT)
Email: csft@kalianet.to
People applying from Samoa, Fiji and Tonga.

Henry Vila, Vanuatu Association of NGOs (VANGO)
Email: vango@vanuatu.com.vu
People applying from Solomon Islands and Fiji

Development Services Exchange (DSE)
Email: teamleader@dse.org.sb
People applying from Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Nauru.

Melanesian NGO Centre for Leadership (MNCL)
Email: mncl@online.net.pg
People applying from PNG

People applying from FSM, Palau, Guam and CNMI send your applications to respective 'host' NLUs where you wish to take up courses with. For any further queries contact: Eleni Levin-Tevi on eleni@piango.net or piango@connect.com.fj

4. Pacific Donor and Funding News

AUSAID

23 February 2009: Australia Provide Funds for Human Rights

Today, in a regular consultation with Australian human rights Non-Government Organisations, I announced the Australian Government will provide \$1.9 million to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote and protect human rights in the Asia-Pacific region. This is a \$700,000 increase on the funding Australia provided in 2007-08 and reflects the Government's commitment to engaging in and with the United Nations and to the advancement of human rights. Australia recognises the substantial contribution the UN High Commissioner, Navanethem Pillay, and her office makes in promoting and protecting human rights. [More>](#)

19 February 2009: Australia and Indonesia: Partners in a New Era

Australia will host a High Level Conference on the future of the Australia-Indonesia relationship in Sydney from Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 February 2009. Prime Minister Rudd announced the Conference following his meeting with Indonesian President Yudhoyono in Bali last December. The Conference will bring together leading Indonesians and Australians from a range of backgrounds, including government, industry, academia, the media, community organisations, faith groups and youth. [More>](#)

09 February 2009: Australia Hosts New Player in the Fight Against Malaria

Australia will this week host the launch of a new regional network established to vigorously scale-up efforts to fight malaria in the Asia Pacific region. "The inaugural meeting of the Asia Pacific Malaria Elimination Network in Brisbane will give countries an opportunity to collectively share their experiences and progress towards malaria elimination," Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan said. "That Australia is hosting the network's inaugural meeting is a further demonstration of our leadership in progressively eliminating malaria. [More>](#)

05 February 2009: Humanitarian Assistance for Sri Lanka

Australia remains gravely concerned at the worsening humanitarian situation in the north of Sri Lanka. We are especially concerned by reports of civilian casualties, the continued vulnerability of civilians caught in the conflict, and the difficulty of delivering aid. In response, the Australian Government will contribute \$5 million in additional humanitarian assistance to those affected in the north of Sri Lanka. This assistance will help ensure that civilians caught up in the conflict have access to basic goods such as medical supplies, shelter, water, and sanitation. Australia will deliver this assistance through the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations, and non-governmental organisations. [More>](#)

Commonwealth Foundation

19 February 2009: Civil society organisations to benefit from accountability toolkit

Governance and accountability issues tools delivered through latest Governance and Democracy programme work. Over a decade ago, the Commonwealth Foundation produced its seminal work Non-Governmental Organisations: Guidelines for Good policy and Practice. The most striking development since the publication of the Guidelines in 1995 has been the concept of globalisation. Trends towards global and regional economies; the transnational nature of environmental threats; and the potential impacts of information technology; and the war on terror still give cause for concern. [More>](#)

06 February 2009: Education for all

Malaysia ready for best-attended education conference. Preparations are under way for the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (17CCEM) in Kuala Lumpur. The June 2009 conference is on course to be the best attended CCEM since the first one was held in 1959. The theme of the 17CCEM is 'Education in the Commonwealth: Towards and Beyond Global Goals and Targets' which will enable participants to consider educational achievements in the context of the global goals - the Millennium Development Goals in Education and Education for All. The conference will also look beyond 2015 to carry forward the education agenda set by these global initiatives. Alongside the ministerial meeting, four forums will facilitate interaction around the key themes among civil society, teachers, vice-chancellors and youth. A Stakeholders' Forum will bring together representatives from national and international agencies, experts, academics, teachers, NGOs, youth and the private sector engaged in education at all levels in the Commonwealth. [More>](#)

04 February 2009: Organisations join forces to support Commonwealth fisheries

Ensuring sustainability and improving the livelihoods of coastal communities. In early 2007, a group of Commonwealth organisations met to consider how best they could ensure sustainability and improve the livelihoods of coastal communities in developing countries. High-level ministerial meetings and civil society in the Commonwealth were identified as powerful mechanisms to help achieve this. These play a key role in highlighting issues and areas requiring capacity, then help in the formulation of policy tools to aid fisheries management [More>](#)

NZAID

13 February 2009: Fiji sugar industry not given financial help - says NZAid

The New Zealand Aid Agency NZAID has rejected reports from Fiji that it has provided around a million US dollars in assistance for the country's sugar industry. FijiLive has reported that NZAID is preparing a relief package to help salvage the ailing industry. It quotes the Fiji Sugar Cane Growers Council's chief executive, Surendra Sharma, saying he had written to the Australian and New Zealand Governments, and the European Union seeking assistance for an industry he described as dying a slow death. [More>](#)

11 February 2009: NZ's Aids Foundation's Pacific branch welcomes Pacific Police initiative

The New Zealand Aids Foundation's Pacific branch is in full support of a programme being designed by police officials in the Pacific who plan to help fight the spread of Aids. Twenty one countries in the region including New Caledonia, Niue and Kiribati plan to introduce an awareness campaign about the virus that will be introduced by local police. A health promoter of the New Zealand Aids Foundation for Pacific people's programmes, Phylesha Brown-Acton, says public awareness is essential and say fully behind the police project. [More>](#)

5. Pacific Regional NGO News

Greenpeace

20 February 2009: Australians betrayed on climate policy once again - renewable energy target fails design hurdles

The scheme is designed to encourage businesses and consumers to make the switch to renewable energy. The generation of renewable energy is rewarded with certificates expected to be worth about \$70 each. But according to Greenpeace

climate and energy campaigner Julien Vincent, the Government plans to give out certificates without electricity being generated which means that the real amount renewable energy generated will fall well short of the 20% target. "Awarding renewable energy credits for electricity that is not produced completely undermines the target," Mr Vincent said. The flaws include plans to give people who install solar PV panels five times the number of certificates than the electricity that the panels produce. [More>](#)

19 February 2009: Government must call enquiry into big polluters' influence on ETS

"The Government have got their Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme so catastrophically wrong that it is no wonder they don't want any scrutiny of it," Greenpeace climate campaign co-ordinator John Hepburn said following Mr Swan's decision to ask for the Parliamentary Inquiry into the scheme to be discontinued this afternoon. "In its current form, the scheme will reward the biggest polluters with billions of dollars in handouts and will still allow greenhouse emissions to increase. "It is a complete capitulation to heavy industry and a betrayal of the Australian public who voted for action on climate change." Greenpeace is calling on Mr Swan to not only continue with the controversial Parliamentary Inquiry, but to broaden its scope to include a review of the influence of the biggest polluters on shaping the emission trading scheme. [More>](#)

6. Crop Agency News

PIFS - Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

10 February 2009: Fiji Labour Party leader says technical team may not meet Forum's May deadline

The leader of the Fiji Labour Party, Mahendra Chaudhry, says he doesn't think the United Nations/Commonwealth Secretariat team currently in the country will be able to help the interim government set an election date by May. The team is meeting with political parties, stakeholders and the interim government on the Proposed President's Forum. Mr Chaudhry says the team seems to be keen to start work by March. But he says he's not sure if it will be able to meet the Pacific Forum's May deadline, because its purpose is to discuss the issues getting in the way of an early election. [More>](#)

03 February 2009: New regional programme supports adaptation to climate change

A new regional project will help three Pacific island countries, Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu, cope with the effects of climate change. The Euro 4.2 million project is being funded by GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) and will be based at SPC's (Secretariat of the Pacific Community) Land Resources Division in Suva. For some time now, SPC has been systematically integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies into its policy, technical and advisory services. In the Pacific, climate change is likely to cause saline intrusion in atolls, coral bleaching, increased coastal erosion, changes in rainfall patterns, and shifts in tuna stocks. In addition, more extreme weather events may severely damage food crops and infrastructure, impacting on food security, water resources and even tourism. Climate sensitive diseases may be worsened by climate change. [More >](#)

SPC - Secretariat of the Pacific Community

01 February 2009: SPC raise FJ \$17,000 to help children in flood-stricken Fiji

SPC's Director-General, Dr Jimmie Rodgers presented FJ\$17,000 to the Save the Children to help children in flood-stricken areas of Fiji return to school. Staff in SPC's three main offices in Noumea, New Caledonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia and Suva, Fiji, raised FJ\$8348 with fund-raising beginning immediately after the flash floods that devastated large parts of the Western and Northern Divisions. The organization topped this amount by giving \$8652 to total FJ\$17,000. "This donation shows that SPC staff have their hearts in the right places. And for an organisation that serves the grassroots, the initiative should help in reaching out to children in rural and isolated areas whose lives were particularly affected by the floods," Dr Rodgers said. [More >](#)

SPREP - South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

05 February 2009: Sea turtle research database for the Pacific to be released

A seven-year effort to develop a Pacific region database on sea turtle research will culminate with the launch of the Turtle Research Database System (TREDS), 5:30 to 6:00 p.m., Feb. 17, 2009, at the 29th Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and

Conservation, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Australia. TREDIS collates and standardizes marine turtle data and is critical to understanding population trends throughout the Pacific. The launch event will include a briefing, demonstration and question-and-answer opportunity. CD copies of the database system will be distributed.

[More>](#)

7. Other News

CIVICUS

24 February 2009: Messina refugees in limbo

Johannesburg - Up to 4 000 Zimbabwean refugees are "waiting in limbo" in Messina, activists said on Tuesday. Gender Equity Commission head Nombuniso Gasas and Emily Wellman of Idasa were briefing the media following a visit to the refugees in the border town. They had found "up to 4 000 people [who] are waiting in limbo, undocumented and confined, many sleeping on cardboard, the lucky ones with plastic sheeting to cover them as they sleep," Wellman said. Gasas is on the 14th day of a 21-day hunger strike to "help the people of Zimbabwe by highlighting the issue of hunger". "A lot of people in Zimbabwe go without food and they don't have a choice. So some of us are choosing not to eat as an act of solidarity," Gasas said. She is the second person to go on hunger strike with the Save Zimbabwe Now organisation. The first was global civil society organisation Civicus honorary president Kumi Naidoo, who ended his 21-day hunger strike on February 11, at which point Gasas began hers. [More>](#)

Islands Business

19 February 2009: President Obama looks forward to working with Commonwealth

Barack Obama, the new President of the , is looking forward to working with the Commonwealth over his next four years in office. In a letter to Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma, he wrote: "I am confident that we can work together in a spirit of peace and friendship to build a more secure world." "I look forward to working with you in that effort, and in promoting good relations between the and the Commonwealth," he added. [More >](#)

17 February 2009: Key Pacific trade talks open in Australia

Australian Trade Minister Simon Crean says he wants to ensure that the proposed Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations "PACER-plus" trade agreement with the Pacific Islands provides the basis for long-term sustainability in the region. Mr Crean was speaking at the opening of a two-day meeting on Pacific trade in the South Australian capital city of Adelaide. The meeting has brought together trade officials to discuss a roadmap for negotiations for the proposed PACER-plus agreement. Mr Crean said the aim of PACER-plus was to build economic sustainability and to place a priority on capacity-building. [More >](#)

World Bank

20 February 2009: World Bank to Help Finance Serbian Infrastructure

"The World Bank said on Thursday it was ready to provide a \$380 million loan for the development of a key Serbian highway network. The loan will be used to build 158 kilometers of two highway sections that will connect the Bulgarian border and southern Serbia, the bank said in a statement. The talks about the contribution of the World Bank and other financial bodies, including Greece's Hellenic Plan, will be completed by the end of April 2009. Other financial organizations were expected to provide additional \$750 million, the statement said...." [More >](#)

8. Calendar of Meetings & Activities

Calendars of Meetings and Activities are available at the following websites:

[ADB](#)

[Commonwealth Foundation](#)

[East-West Center](#)

[Forum Fisheries Agency](#)

[Forum Secretariat](#)

[SPREP](#)

[WTO](#)

9. About PIANGO, Suggestions, Feedback

Your suggestions for future articles are welcome, as well as any feedback on recent articles.

The closing date for article submissions for the February-Update is Friday 19 February 2009. Article submissions should be brief and text only. Please email to piango@connect.com.fj

About PIANGO

The Pacific Islands Association of Non Governmental Organisations (PIANGO) is a regional network of NGO focal points or coordinating bodies known as National Liaison Units (NLUs) based in 21 Pacific Island countries and territories.

PIANGO was formally established in 1991 to assist NGOs in the Pacific to initiate action, give voice to their concerns and work collaboratively with other development actors for just and sustainable human development. PIANGO's primary role is to be a catalyst for collective action, to facilitate and support coalitions and alliances on issues of common concern, and to strengthen the influence and impact of NGO efforts in the region.

National Members

Member contact details can be found on the [PIANGO website](#)

Aotearoa / NZ-ANGOA

American Samoa

Australia - [ACFID](#)

Cook Islands - CIANGO

Guam - PA'YUTA

Fiji - [FCOSS](#)

Kiribati - KANGO

Marshall Islands

Micronesia (FSM) - [FANGO](#)

Nauru - NIANGO

Niue - NIANGO

PNG (interim) - MNCL

Samoa - SUNGO

Solomon Islands - DSE

Tahiti - Hiti Tau

Tonga - [CSFT](#)

Tuvalu - [TANGO](#)

Vanuatu - VANGO

Interim Members

Bougainville - Nikana Ma'atara

East Timor - CSCBF

Guam - Sanctuary Inc

Palau - PCAA

Wallis and Futuna - ASCV

West Papua

Observers

Hawaii

e-Update in French language

The e-update is also available in French. Please advise us if you would like to receive the e-Update in French by sending an email to piango@connect.com.fj

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