



PIANGO

Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
Association des ONGs des Iles du Pacifique

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Media Release

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Regionalism is important for Pacific Island Countries

Pacific Islands Association of Non - Governmental Organisations (PIANGO) Board Chair, Adimaimalaga Tafuna'i believes regionalism is important as most Pacific Island Countries are affected by issues such as globalisation with the most affected people not understanding the rhetoric on trade agreements.

According to Tafuna'i, it is easy for governments and regional organisations to meet and discuss issues affecting the Pacific, however the essence of issues is to focus on the people.

"We need to keep focused on the ground. There are so many different people and cultures over the Pacific. We need to look at the situation in the regional area, in terms of pooling resources, sharing markets and addressing how to ensure sustainable livelihoods." she said.

Tafuna'i said most Pacific islanders in sustaining their livelihoods, live in isolated communities without employment or commercial markets to sell their produce although there is an immense need for cash.

"The Pacific Islands Countries are rich in resources, but cash poor. The economy is pretty stable, except for the reliance upon remittances and aid."

When looking at the resources to be exported, Tafuna'i believes Pacific Islands Countries will find it difficult to compete with the bigger countries.

"We need to look towards our neighbours and for ways of sharing markets. While no one wants to share their markets with the country next door, it is necessary for resources to be pooled to sustain markets. The picture is not all doom and gloom."

According to Tafuna'i, Samoa, Tonga and Niue are already starting to share markets as well as talk about disaster mitigation, helped by Oxfam NZ. She also highly recommends those in civil society need to begin thinking about this, as the grassroots are going to be affected.

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