



2017 Apia Call for Partnerships for Pacific-Specific Development September 8th 2017



Over 40 Civil Society Leaders from Samoa, Niue, Cook Islands, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Guam and Nauru gathered in Apia on 31st August – 1st September, for a Pre PIFs Civil Society Roundtable convened by the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO), to discuss national and regional concerns ahead of the 48th Pacific Islands' Forum Leaders' meeting. The meeting was officially opened by the PIANGO board chairwoman, Sarah Thomas-Nededog and formally closed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat secretary general, Dame Meg Taylor last week.

With the title of and thematic discussions on **“Rethinking and Reshaping the Pacific We Want – Big Ocean States in a Blue Pacific”**, Pacific civil society leaders deliberated on

- a) The Global Development Agenda within the Geopolitical Context
- b) Pacific Stewardship and Climate Justice
- c) Pacific governance and leadership
- d) Self Determination and Decolonisation
- e) CSOs - Leaders Dialogue
- f) Pacific Regionalism

At the outset, **Pacific CSOs called for deeper and meaningful partnerships based on trust and mutuality between governments and civil society sectors in the region.** In this light, CSOs call for an evaluation of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat CSO Engagement Strategy to assess its effectiveness in engaging the spectrum of civil society that exists in the region and to ensure that there is continued resourcing to support the in country engagements of civil society within their sector and those of policy makers. Pacific CSOs believe this will ensure the continued prioritisation of CSOs as a standing agenda item on all forum leaders ministerial meetings.



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At the roundtable meeting, civil society acknowledged the work done so far on *the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* but urged Pacific leaders to deepen the engagement of CSOs and ensure their involvement in localisation efforts at country level to increase ownership of the goals at community levels. Additionally, **CSOs called for systematic support for their involvement in planning, implementation and monitoring of the work that Pacific governments have begun to do to localise the SDGs.**

CSOs urged Pacific leaders to reconsider notions and paradigms of development as they discussed issues of Pacific Stewardship and Climate Justice and the manner in which Pacific approaches to natural resource management and wellbeing have been abandoned in favour of neoliberal approaches to development. In this light, **CSOs call for solidarity in the region as it mounts a united, region-wide campaign to oppose seabed mining and advocate for climate justice solutions that speak to and respect the dignity of Pacific people.**

Pacific CSOs representatives at the roundtable meeting commit to increasing their efforts on CSO Accountability and ensuring transparency in their work through a Pacific CSO Code for Minimum Standards. **They acknowledged leaders' efforts to creating mechanisms for dialogue and joint action on national development priorities and plans between government and civil society such as the Samoa Civil Society Support Programme (SCSSP).** SCSSP is an example of the implementation of the Busan Partnership Agreement at country level because it is a mechanism that drives shared ownership of development priorities, is results focussed and promotes partnership, transparency and accountability.

CSOs further call on Pacific leaders to extend this commitment to aid and development effectiveness by ensuring that all regional taskforces are inclusive of civil society representation and their meaningful contributions.

To address climate change, **civil society reiterates the importance of keeping fossil fuels in the ground. CSOs urge leaders to continue calling for a moratorium on new coal mines as in the Suva Declaration 2015, beginning with our Pacific neighbours.**

In addition, Pacific CSOs recognize that climate impacts are happening and some loss and damage will be inevitable. At the 'Pacific' COP, CSOs urge **leaders to support a decision which will provide finance to vulnerable countries and communities on the front line of impacts, simply and directly.** CSOs also support **the establishment of a Pacific Island Climate Change Insurance Facility as proposed by Tuvalu.**

At the roundtable meeting, CSOs discussed and reaffirmed the need for NCDs to remain a priority for sustainable development. They recognized leaders' continuing work on this issue but feel that



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Governments should actively engage and include CSOs in their policies, implementation and activities to address NCDs. Control and prevention of the NCD crisis in the Pacific can only happen when government, civil society and other stakeholders take action together.

CSOs uphold that there is little productivity without women, girls and youths realising full agency of their sexual and reproductive health rights and to therefore call on government leaders to enable spaces for the fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health rights for all that will ensure long term equitable development.

CSOs call on leaders to ensure that their adoption of Pacific Framework on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Pohnpei, FSM last year is matched with consistent implementation and resourcing so that its vision for *an inclusive, barrier-free, and rights-based society for men, women and children with disabilities, which embraces the diversity of all Pacific people* is achieved.

CSOs express grave concerns over the lack of progress on the unfinished business of decolonisation in the region and in particular, the;

- a) Deteriorating health conditions faced by indigenous Papuans and human rights violations that take place in West Papua. We acknowledge the effort of the Forum Leaders on this issue and affirm calls for the inclusion of CSO representatives in a Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat observer mission for Indonesian Elections in 2019
- b) The continued threat of missile attacks faced by the people of Guam and the impacts of insecurity resulting from ongoing tensions between the US and North Korea.
- c) Challenges faced by Kanaks to qualify to register and participate in the 2018 New Caledonia independence referendum

These and other ongoing self-determination struggles such as that of Maohi Nui continue to hinder regional efforts for peace and security in the Pacific and as such, **CSOs will continue to support and work in solidarity in these communities for the full realisation of dignity and justice.** Should the PIF Secretariat be invited by the Indonesian Government to observe the 2019 elections, Pacific CSOs call on Leaders to include civil society representatives in the Election Observer mission.

Justice and dignity must be fundamental to our development efforts as a region particularly as **CSOs strive to foster Pacific communities where people are free to make choices about their sexuality, gender and well-being.**

Finally, the Pacific CSO Roundtable meeting discussed and reaffirmed that the sustainable, resilient Blue Pacific Leaders have envisioned for future generations is a Pacific that is aligned to our definitions of



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wellbeing. Wellbeing that goes beyond materialistic and purely economic definitions of success and development but encapsulates living in a state of balance and harmony with each other, nature and God.

With gratitude, PIANGO acknowledges the support of the

1. **Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the European Union** for this Pre PIFs CSO Roundtable meeting
2. **Bread for the World support** for PIANGO's program on decolonisation and self-determination
3. **CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE)** for their support of PIANGO's work on Development Effectiveness.
4. **International Forum of National NGO Platforms (IFP)** for their support of PIANGO's work on regional coalitions and SDG monitoring

ENDs