

'Including the Excluded in Global Politics': The Pacific Island Micro-states and global politics¹

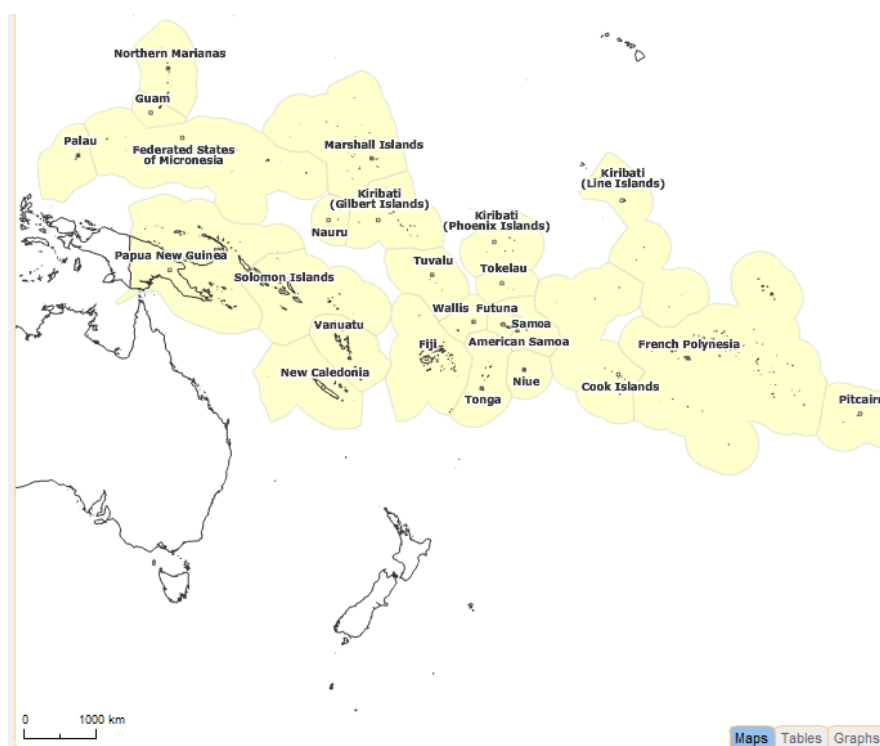
Graham Hassall²

1. Introduction

In his epic study *The South Pacific* the late Pacific Islands scholar Ron Crocombe noted the precarious position of the Pacific nations in the larger scheme of things:

“The world’s largest, richest, most powerful nations are on the Pacific rim. The world’s smallest are the Islands nations. If we focus on the word ‘nation’, the imbalance appears extreme. If we focus on people, however, the imbalance is reversed for, relative to population size, Pacific Islanders have the greatest power in the world in international forums. The 9 million people of the 14 Islands nations of the Pacific Islands Forum have more voting power than the 2,900 million people of China, India, Japan and the USA put together in many international forums. But it would be wise not to overuse that symbolic lever, lest the larger nations restructure the international system on a more democratic basis.” (Crocombe 2008) p 593

Table 1 Map of Pacific Islands. Source: <http://www.spc.int/prism/online-mapping>



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² School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington. The author thanks Rod Alley, Emele Duituturaga, Katayoun Hassall, Michael Powles, and Teresea Teaiwa for their insightful comments.

Of course, circumstances “on the ground” are even more complex and precarious than Crocombe’s interesting observation suggests, for the Pacific’s nine-million inhabitants occupy the world’s largest ocean and enjoy some of the largest entitlements to marine resources through their “exclusive economic zones” - but include a number of the world’s smallest sovereign states, national populations, and economies, as well as a significant number of the world’s remaining dependent territories and peoples. In sum, Pacific Island Countries exhibit significant economic, social, environmental and political vulnerabilities, which combine to make their participation in global affairs extremely challenging, at the same time that the vast ocean that links them provides their current sustenance, potential future wealth, and intellectual disposition. (Teaiwa 2006) (Jolly 2005)

This chapter explores these vulnerabilities in the search for ways in which Pacific peoples might contribute to building global democracy. It begins with a brief account of the Pacific political economy and the nature of the exclusions experienced under the impact of globalisation, before describing Pacific responses to this exclusion, and assessing prospects for greater Pacific participation in an emerging global society.

Pacific Societies

The Pacific Islands population comprises approximately seven million Papua New Guineans and approximately two million additional inhabitants of other territories. Projections of Pacific populations in 2015 and 2050 for 22 countries are provided by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community’s “Pacific Regional Information System”:

Table 2 : Source: <http://www.spc.int/prism/population-mid-year-2010-projections>

Country	Mid-Year 2015 Total	Mid-Year 2050 Total
Fiji Islands	868,198	1,060,706
New Caledonia	273,074	359,406
Papua New Guinea	7,476,504	13,271,057
Solomon Islands	624,667	1,245,774
Vanuatu	277,572	538,707
Federated States of Micronesia	113,864	137,554
Guam	212,011	267,820
Kiribati	110,280	163,266
Marshall Islands	57,127	61,217
Nauru	11,006	16,283
Northern Mariana Islands	66,591	80,137
Palau	21,168	22,459
American Samoa	70,039	98,271
Cook Islands	15,747	15,977
French Polynesia	283,577	348,778
Niue	1,328	1,283
Samoa	185,440	209,740
Tokelau	1,153	1,148
Tonga	104,851	123,008
Tuvalu	11,445	13,858
Wallis and Futuna	13,110	13,570
Total	10,798,752	18,050,019

The small scale of Pacific Island societies is evident from both the map and the demographic data presented above: only Papua New Guinea has a population above one million whilst the smallest territory, the British dependency of Pitcairn Island, has a mere 100 inhabitants. Fourteen countries are sovereign and independent nations, and combine with Australia and New Zealand as members of the Pacific Islands Forum: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The remaining eight countries on the SPC's list of 22 are not sovereign and have dependent status: New Caledonia, Guam, American Samoa, French Polynesia, Pitcairn, Tokelau, Mariana Islands, and Wallis and Futuna.

These Pacific micro-states have emerged from interactions between the region's geography, cultures and histories. The archipelagic setting influenced the formation of nations and empires in ways not experienced in most other parts of the world: of all the Pacific island countries, for instance, Papua New Guinea alone shares a land border with its neighbour. For the rest, international relations were maritime, and whilst Pacific history does include international invasion and conquest, war and peace more often involved internal rather than external conflict.

Ethnically, Pacific societies are typically described as belonging to one of three broad culture groups: Micronesian, Melanesian, or Polynesian. Sahlins' classic study distinguished between the "big man" politics of Melanesia and the chiefly politics of Polynesia (Sahlins 1963), and these distinctions have consequences for the different ways in which "western" models of democracy were received: leaders who must "achieve" their influence in Melanesia use resources and relationships differently to those leaders whose status is "ascribed" by birth in the chiefly societies prevalent in Polynesia and Micronesia. The constitutions and legal frameworks in Polynesia and Micronesia consequently tend to entrench traditional authority to a greater extent than do those in Melanesia, and the discourse of democracy flows differently in chiefly and non-chiefly societies.

2. The colonial experience

Over the past several centuries, virtually all Pacific societies had their sovereignty extinguished at one time or another by one of the metropolitan colonial powers. From the time of that experience – which ironically contributed to the *reduction* in the number of political communities across the islands to the small number existing today – global politics has taken the form of impositions on Pacific societies by outside forces, shaping all the while their boundaries, their cultures, their economic and political relations, and their possibilities for independence.³ World events imposed themselves through warfare (WWI, WWII); peace (League of Nations Trusteeships, United Nations Mandates); preparation for war (American and French nuclear testing); strategic rivalry (the cold war" between the first (Democratic) and second (Communist) states; China & Taiwan; China and the West); natural resource exploitation (logging, copper, gas, oil, fisheries); and in recent times, climate change (Copenhagen).

The constitutional, administrative, and economic models adopted at independence by the PICs, were equally "foreign", with considerable consequences for the operation of democracy. (Larmour 2005) This shaping of Pacific peoples into nation-states through decolonization using the models provided

³ Ironically, the seemingly large number of Pacific Island countries – 14 independent and 8 dependent in the modern period– results from a during the wave of colonization that commenced in Micronesia in the C17th and continued in the case of Melanesian into the late C20th. Whereas empires may have existed in Hawaii, Tonga and Samoa, communities elsewhere were smaller – in a manner similar to the principalities and dukedoms in Europe prior to their consolidation into empires and nations. One implication is that the "nation-states" formed at the moment of decolonization and independence bore little resemblance to traditional political communities. Thus "Vanuatu", "Solomon Islands", the "Marshall Islands", and even the "Fiji Islands", represent colonial state boundaries rather than traditional affinities, just as the states of modern Africa seldom resemble the contours of pre-colonial social and political boundaries –and as is the case elsewhere – traditional loyalties have not been forgotten, merely transformed into contemporary provincialisms.

by colonial masters ensured acceptance by the international community of nations (status at the UN, entry into various international and regional organizations), but also inhibited the advance of Pacific integration, since political and administrative elites have more incentives in keeping these systems going than in asking whether they are the right vehicles for the delivery of the well-being of Pacific citizens.

The Pacific states now struggle to achieve economic growth,⁴ infrastructure development,⁵ the Millennium Development Goals,⁶ integrity in their government system,⁷ and Human Development.⁸ In a globalised world, they lack economic security and human capital, and experience geographic isolation.

1. Economic foundations.

Traditional Pacific economies were agricultural and subsistence-based. Wealth grew through complex systems of barter and exchange which contributed to cultural meaning and social coherence. These were modified by transition in the colonial-era to cash-cropping (copra, cocoa, coffee) and natural resource extraction (gold, copper), with only minimal engagement in the production of goods (food, shoes, clothing) and services. Post-independence, Pacific economies are reliant on fishing royalties, agricultural produce, natural resource extraction (timber, metals, some oil and gas), tourism, and remittances. Commodity values fluctuate with global trends. Preferential access to metropolitan markets has been replaced by entry to the single global economy based on WTO rules which are unforgiving on such matters as isolation; the shift of significant proportions of each country's population into urban areas has decreased reliance on traditional agricultural activity and increased pressure on the modern economy to generate jobs that provide workers with adequate minimum wages. Preference for imported foodstuffs and consumer items places constant pressure on each nation's balance of payments, and the rising cost of fuel imports has not been mitigated by shifts to more sustainable energy generation.

2. Human and political capital

Economic stresses are compounded by limitations on human capital. Human Development indicators remain low, reflecting the challenges of providing adequate health and education services across disparate island communities. Only those schooled in English and French supplementary to their local languages are able to proceed to higher education and to careers in the public sector or the modern economy. This shortage of qualified citizens, compounded by "brain drain" and exodus resulting from coups and conflict, together with limits on public sector capacity, often equates to a lack of staff in critical government offices including foreign affairs, legal and financial affairs, planning, and audit

⁴ Asian Development Bank (2005). Toward New Pacific Regionalism: An Asian Development Bank-Commonwealth Secretariat Joint Report to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Manila, Asian Development Bank, Asian Development Bank (2008). Pacific Choice: Improving Government. Manila, Asian Development Bank.

⁵ The World Bank (2006). The Pacific Infrastructure Challenge: A Review of obstacles and opportunities for improving performance in the Pacific Islands. Washington, The World Bank. East Asia and Pacific Region; Pacific Island Country Management Unit.

⁶ Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2004). Pacific Islands Regional Millennium Development Goals report 2004: 147, UNESCAP Secretariat (2005). "Second Regional Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report for Asia and the Pacific: Achieving the MDGs in Asia and the Pacific - an Institutional Perspective."

⁷ Asian Development Bank (2006). Second Governance and Anticorruption Action Plan. Manila, Asian Development Bank, AusAID (2007). Tacking Corruption for Growth and Development: A Policy for Australian Development Assistance on Anti-Corruption. Canberra, AusAID, Larmour, P. (2008). "Guarding the Guardians: Accountability and Anticorruption in Fiji's Cleanup campaign." Pacific Islands Policy 4, United Nations Development Program (2008). Asia-Pacific Human Development Report: Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives: Accelerating Human Development in Asia and the Pacific. Delhi, UNDP and MacMillan.

⁸ Otter, M. (2002). Solomon Islands human development report 2002: building a nation. Windsor: 118, Hassall, G. (2006). Governance for Human Development. The Eye of the Cyclone: Book II: Governance and Stability in the Pacific. I. Molloy and R. Reavell. Sippy Downs, University of the Sunshine Coast and Rock Mountain: 19-26, The World Bank (2007). Opportunities Human Development in the Pacific Islands. Washington, The World Bank. Human Development Sector Unit. East Asia and Pacific Region.

and oversight. It also has consequences for the quality of candidates in elections for national legislatures, and in quality of appointments to cabinet and to diplomatic positions. Although not systematically remarked on, lack of political capital in the region is associated with diffidence toward the introduced political systems. There may be a preference for “talanoa” and other mutual-sense making dialogue processes more attuned to Pacific traditions. (Pacific Islands Development Program 2001; Vaiotei 2006; Halapua and Halapua 2010; Halapua n.d.)

3. Geographic isolation

Geographic isolation constitutes a third significant barrier to participation in global processes. Civil society is present but still embryonic; mass media is similarly present but lacking comprehensive reach, due to lack of infrastructure and the high cost of communication technologies which perpetuate as much as ameliorate digital divides. If the Pacific’s urban communities feel excluded, those in rural settings do even more so (half of all Pacific Islanders live in villages rather than towns). The high cost of travel inhibits the flow of goods and services into and out of the region. The proximity of the Caribbean nations to North America makes comparison between Caribbean and Pacific economies unfair.

3. The Pacific states in global politics

The Pacific States are as often overlooked when invitations are offered by international agencies to developing countries to attend a variety of workshops. This is particularly the case when organizations seek representatives from “Asia Pacific”, a grouping that only intermittently includes Pacific Island participants. Some examples are given here but it should be noted that their inclusion in no way implies systematic omission by these organizations. In 2005 the United Nations invited country representatives to a meeting in Geneva to discuss “Strengthening the Role of Parliaments in Conflict and Post-conflict Situations”. Those countries representing “Asia Pacific” at the project’s regional meeting in Sri Lanka had included Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste - (United Nations Development Programme 2005) notwithstanding the fact that such countries as Solomon Islands had experienced significant levels of conflict in the recent past. Major studies on climate change can include cases from all regions of the world except the Pacific, whose member-countries are amongst the most vulnerable and most in need of implementation toward adaptation. (van den Berg and Feinstein 2009) At United Nations Rio+20 Conference held in Brazil in 2012 Cook Islands - a state with constitutional ties to New Zealand which had attended both the 1992 Rio and 2002 Johannesburg Conferences – was denied speaking rights on the basis that it lacked independent membership of the UN ,(**Small Islands Fights For Voice At Rio+20 Conference: Cook Islands, Niue being refused right to speak**”, (Cook Islands News, June 6, 2012)

Whereas state and non-state actors have pursued increased recognition, voice and influence, using both bilateral and multilateral means, their actions, when viewed regionally, possess more stability than when assessed alone. Fiji Islands, for instance, has experienced four military coups since 1987 and is currently suspended from the Pacific Islands Forum and from the Commonwealth of Nations following overthrow of the democratically elected government by the Fiji military in December 2006; Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands are sometimes listed as “failed states” – although this label is contested (Chauvet, Collier et al. 2007); the Republic of Nauru reached the brink of bankruptcy following mismanagement of considerable phosphate earnings; whilst the low-lying atolls – particularly Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands – are threatened with permanent submersion by rising sea-levels associated with global warming.

Viewed in global context, however, these same states become a small but noticeable force on the world stage, assisting the international community focus on such critical issues as climate change, renewable energy, environmental conservation, sustainable development, development finance, the Law of the Sea, sustainable Fisheries, and International Peace & Security – including violence against women. The Pacific states have achieved this by developing Pacific regionalism, and by engaging to the fullest extent that their resources have allowed, in international affairs.

Pacific regionalism grows on foundations laid the Pacific Islands Forum, first established in 1971. The Forum operates a secretariat in Suva (<http://www.forumsec.org.fj/>) and although it does not include incorporated and unincorporated territories and states of the United States (the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Hawaii), the Forum does recognize seven “Observers”⁹ and thirteen “dialogue partners”,¹⁰ and provides also dialogue with civil society organizations having regional reach.

The Pacific Islands Forum and nine additional regional bodies are collectively referred to as the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP):

- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
- Fiji School of Medicine (FSchM)
- Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)
- Pacific Islands Development Programme (PIDP)
- Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC)
- South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
- South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO)
- University of the South Pacific (USP)
- Pacific Power Association (PPA)

There is some degree of duplication in the work of these bodies, just as there is some duplication with work undertaken by PICs themselves, a degree of competition between some PICs, and emerging sub-regional interests which also vie for attention and resources.¹¹ An official review of this “Regional Institutional Framework” in 2006 resulted in small modifications (Tavola, Baaro et al. 2006), whilst an independent assessment in 2007 (Graham 2008) demonstrated the idiosyncratic nature of the Pacific’s “multi-level governance”. (Chand 2005)

There have been a number of proposals by the Pacific’s neighbours to consider formation of a “Pacific Parliament” (Moore 1982) or a “Pacific Union” (Australian Senate, NZ Foreign Affairs Committee), but Pacific regional cooperation has progress since 2005 in accordance with the more pragmatic “Pacific Plan”¹² focused on (i) fostering economic development and promoting opportunities for broad-based growth; (ii) improving livelihoods and the well-being of Pacific peoples; (iii) addressing the impacts of climate change; (iv) achieving stronger national development through better governance; and (v) ensuring improved social, political and legal conditions for stability, safety and security.” (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2011) There are, too, tendencies toward sub-regional affiliation, through the “Melanesian Spearhead” group of countries that has established a secretariat in Port Vila, as well as suggestions from Solomon Islands of a “Pan-Melanesian Economic Union”. There are significant proposals for reform, such as such initiatives as “pooled regional governance”, a single currency, “closer economic relations” with Australia and New Zealand, and fisheries reform.

In broad, these goals have been pursued through participation in significant policy discourse (the Mauritius Strategy, and the Brussels Programme of Action), and through cultivating networks and

⁹ Tokelau, Wallis and Futuna, Timor-Leste, the United Nations, Commonwealth of Nations, Asian Development Bank and WCPFC (Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission).

¹⁰ Canada, People’s Republic of China, the European Union, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, United Kingdom and the United States.

¹¹ Seven of the 14 independent PICS form a sub-group known as the “Smaller Island States” (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau and Tuvalu), whilst four others form the Melanesian Spearhead” Group (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) – a grouping which also includes the FLNKS – the indigenous political party of New Caledonia.

¹² “The Pacific Plan embodies the Leaders’ vision for the Pacific to be a region that is “*respected for the quality of its governance, the sustainable management of its resources, the full observance of democratic values, and for its defence and promotion of human rights*”.”

alliances: the Asian Group, G77, the Alliance of Small Island States, the Commonwealth, the European Union, etc. Just three Pacific states are part of the non-aligned movement – Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and, since 2010, Fiji, whereas bi-lateral relations between Pacific states and countries across the globe continue to expand. In recent years individual Pacific states have established diplomatic relations with an ever-broadening range of partners. In 2010 the Federated States of Micronesia established diplomatic relations with Finland, Egypt, Morocco and Brazil. (<http://www.fsmgov.org/diprel.html>). Palau has established diplomatic relations not only with countries within the Asia Pacific but with India, Greece, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, and Morocco. In 2010 the first Pacific-Arab summit was held.

Just twelve PICs are members of the United Nations Organization. Tuvalu, which is the most recent of the Pacific countries to join (September 2000), is the only PIC lacking permanent representation in New York. As there is no specific grouping for Pacific states within the UN (regional groups exist for the African, Asian, Eastern European, Latin American and Caribbean, and Western European and other states), the PICs are listed with the Asian States.

Table 1 Pacific Countries and the date of their admission to the UN

<i>Country</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Date</i>
Fiji	13 Oct 1970	Federated States of Micronesia	17 Sep 1991
Papua New Guinea	10 Oct 1975	Palau	15 Dec 1994
Samoa	15 Dec 1976	Kiribati	14 Sep 1999
Solomon Islands	19 Sep 1978	Tonga	14 Sep 1999
Vanuatu	15 Sep 1981	Nauru	14 Sep 1999
Marshall Islands	17 Sep 1991	Tuvalu	5 Sep 2000

How well do Pacific Island states connect to UN processes? PIC permanent missions at the UN generally comprise no more than four diplomats, including the Ambassador. Six of the 12 missions are located at 800 Second Ave, with five of these having adjoining suites. But given their limited material and human resources, how do PICs interact in the dense web of activities that includes over 9000 conferences annually and numerous informal and formal meetings? (McNamara 2009)

Substantive engagement within UN structure with its many committee meetings, working groups and multilateral discussions, mostly held concurrently, makes meaningful participation for small missions impossible. Much UN work is done in committee meetings and working groups, and membership to these boards or committees is either through volunteering, election, invitation or open to all. Over the years, PICs have been on significant bodies at the UN as members and office bearers. As Marshall Islands President Kessai H. Note stated at a High-Level Meeting of GA on 15 September 2005, the power of Pacific Island states “lies not in our economic strength, but in our ability to cooperate”.¹³

The Pacific Islands Forum has also taken steps toward recognition within the United Nations system. While established to enhance regional cooperation and integration, it also facilitates global cooperation and integration by translating global policies and agendas into regional ones. It works closely with the UN agencies to facilitate training and aid, and assists the small island states meet their reporting obligations. Speaking to agenda item 56(q) of 59th session of GA on Cooperation between UN and Regional and Other Organizations in 2004, the Pacific Islands Forum expressed its commitment to partnership and closer cooperation with the UN; in June 2012 the Resident Representative of the United Nations in the Pacific Islands met with heads of CROP organizations to consolidate these arrangements.

¹³ In addition to this section, details of PIC participation in key UN bodies is set out in an appendix

The United Nations General Assembly, Committees, and Bodies

As at 2012 the UN General Assembly has held 65 Regular sessions, 28 Special Sessions, and 10 Emergency Special meetings. Of the 28 Special sessions, 13 have been on development issues of interest and concern to PICs, including one session devoted to Africa (13th Special), and one (1999) specifically on Small Island Developing States (22nd Special). PICs have been members of the General Assembly's Third and Fourth and Sixth committees.

PIC membership in GA and its committees and Bodies

Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations ¹⁴	2005	Fiji
Committee on Information	2005	Solomon Islands
Special Committee on the Charter of the UN and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization	2005	All UN member states
Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization	2005	Fiji, PNG
UN Commission on International Trade Law	2004	Fiji
Special Committee on Charter of the UN and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization		All member states
UN-Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea		Open to membership
High-Level Open-Ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the UN		Open membership
Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council		Open membership

The Security Council

Up to 2012 no PIC has held a seat on the Security Council, although Papua New Guinea has exercised its right to “take a seat at the Council table” to speak on the issue of Bougainville,¹⁵ and has asked on such occasions for permission to have Fiji, Japan, and New Zealand present. This intervention resulted in the establishment in 1998 of United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, replaced in 2004 by the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB), which was responsible for supporting the peace process, overseeing weapons destruction, and constitutional processes.

Other PICs have been engaged in Security Council initiatives. Fiji and Samoa participated in UN peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Liberia¹⁶, and the Fijian judge Jai Ram Reddy served on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (SC res. 955, 1994). PICs participated in the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and on the Security Council Open Debate on “Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorism”.¹⁷

¹⁴ Since 1996 Committee's membership comprises of all countries with past and present personnel contribution to UN peacekeeping operations. Currently membership is 115 states.

¹⁵ There is a pattern for voting for non-permanent members Security Council as follows: five from African and Asian states (5 out of 107), one from Eastern Europe states (1 out of 23), two from Latin American and Caribbean states (2 out of 37), and two from Western and European and Other states (2 out of 28).

¹⁶ Fiji contributed personnel to the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and Fiji and Samoa contributed personnel to the UN mission in Liberia.

¹⁷ In this meeting the Pacific Islands Forum expressed its support for the SC's Counter-Terrorism Committee and offered support to the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

Economic and Social Council

A number of PICs have sought to work closely with the Economic and Social Council, which clearly has high relevance to the needs of the Pacific region. It's 54 membership comprises 14 African states, 11 Asian states, 6 Eastern European states, 10 Latin American and Caribbean states, and 13 Western European and other states. It has 9 functional commissions, 5 regional commissions, 2 standing committees and 12 expert committees and subcommittees, and makes recommendations to the GA and relevant UN agencies on development and human rights issues such as health, culture and health, drafts conventions, convenes global conferences, and arranges consultations with NGOs.

Although Fiji (1974-75, 81-83, 2000-02) and Papua New Guinea (1984-86) are the only two Pacific states to have served on the Council to date, ministers from PIC member states can participate in an annual four-day high-level segment of ECOSOC's substantive session.¹⁸ Fiji served on the 53-member Commission on Human Rights from 1981-83 and on the Commission for Sustainable Development (2003-06). Other PICs to have served on this Commission are Vanuatu (1993-94) and Papua New Guinea (1995-98). The Commission was established in 1993 to monitor the progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, the outcome of 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio and continues to be the main high-level UN forum for discussion of sustainable development. At its thirteenth session in 2005, the Commission decided to devote one day of future review sessions to monitoring the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, a Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The Commission has a Small Island Developing States Unit under Water, natural Resources and Small Island Developing States Branch.

All PICs, including non-self-governing territories are members and associate members of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the regional arm of the UN Secretariat and the main economic and social development centre for the region with programs focusing on poverty reduction, managing globalization, and addressing emerging social issues. Other bodies with presence in the regions are Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Asia and the Pacific, a regional subsidiary of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime with the East Asia and the Pacific Office in Bangkok, Thailand.

The United Nations in the Pacific Islands

The member countries of the United Nations have sought to maximise the flow of benefits to individual countries as well as to the region as a whole, through cultivating the presence of UN agencies. Although Fiji is currently suspended from the Pacific Islands forum and the Commonwealth Secretariat, it remains the most important hub for international agencies. UN Bodies located in Suva include: United Nations Resident Coordination (UNRC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women (formerly UNIFEM), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), UN-EPOC (United Nations ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), and United Nations Volunteer (UNV). Many of these organizations also maintain offices in Port Moresby and Apia, and a few are also present in such smaller capitals as Honiara and Port Vila.

Member countries have in general given full support to adoption of the UN's international bill of human rights, although the philosophic and cultural justification of human rights as they pertain to the

¹⁸ As the substantive meeting is held in July in alternate years in New York and in Geneva, with an additional organizational session in February, this requires extra travel for PICs with no representatives in Geneva.

Pacific are much debated, and some states have signed the major covenants with significant reservations (the chapter could look at these in more detail). In most Pacific Island traditions, women enjoy less entitlements than men, and in a recent instance, the Government of Tonga refused to sign CEDAW despite intense campaigns mounted by women's organizations backed by educational campaigns by intergovernmental bodies.

Not surprisingly, Pacific Islands' women participate forcefully in movements advocating the advancement of women and the recognition of gender equality. The 11th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women held 16–20 August 2010 in Noumea comprised 150 participants from 22 countries presented progress in the Pacific region on the Beijing Program of Action. (Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Human Development Programme 2010). Governmental and non-governmental organizations collaborate with Un Women (formerly known as UNIFEM), UNDP, PIFS and other agencies to advocate increased representation of women in Pacific Parliaments (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2006) – although there has not been the increase desired, Pacific governments are moving to legislate for reserved seats for women. PNG parliament recently (23 Feb) voted on a bill that would have secured 22 reserve seats for women in parliament. Samoa is preparing a constitutional amendment for at least 10% of women in parliament. The Solomon Islands current government has a policy commitment to providing several seats for women in parliament. ; prepare women for participation in Commission for the Status of Women reporting processes.

Although no country in the region could be said to espouse anti-democratic values, some attention must be paid to the extent and quality of democracy in the Pacific Islands at local, national, and regional levels, and to the constitutional and political systems through which democratic values and aspirations are expressed. There is little practice of formal democracy, for example, at local level, such as in town councils and local level governments. Although approximately one half of all Pacific Islanders reside in urban areas, a significant number are in squatter settlements and not on rate-payer rolls that give them a stake in local-level decision-making. Considerable emphasis is accorded, on other hand, to participation in voting at national-level elections, although there is growing discontent about the effectiveness of representative democracy, now being expressed in some places through verbal or physical attacks on members of parliament who are felt by constituents to be failing to deliver on their electoral promises. (There is growing evidence of intolerance for systematic corruption by MPs, with more politicians and public servants being charged and convicted on corruption offences.)

Although existence of and support for political parties is commonly used as an indicator of the maturity of a democratic culture, the practice of parties in the Pacific could offer alternative readings. Political parties certainly exist in PICs but most are driven more by personalism, regionalism, and ethnic identity than by ideological programs transcending issues of personality and race. This is clearly indicated by the ease with which formerly competing parties can combine in new ruling coalitions following votes of no confidence, without the burden of conflicting ideological programs, as occurs elsewhere.

UN global Conferences, summits and meetings, and instruments such conventions and treaties are the means through which global policy is formed, discussed, made and legislated. Pacific Island states with partnership with civil society have been active in preparing for these conferences and meetings by holding stakeholder consultations at national and regional levels prior to Prep Com meetings. However, small developing countries do not always have opportunities to participate.

PICs recognise the importance of multilateral forums such the UN for addressing global challenges and are committed to the international community's directives as set out for example in the MDGs. At the same time PICs feel that they should not be held to "unrealistic standards" when it comes to issues that the PICs do not have the resources for, or see it as their national interest. As the permanent representative of Samoa expressed, for instance, in a statement on behalf of the Forum Group to the Security Council, small developing states were not consulted on international Counter-Terrorism standards and as a consequence such standards do not reflect challenges of implementation. For example, although Kiribati signed and acceded to Counter Terrorism Conventions and passed legislation to implement these and major transnational crime treaties, it expressed its inability to

enforce them effectively. Similar reservations were expressed about the ability of the PICs to meet for 5 of the 16 MDG targets by 2015, without significant support from the international community.

In September 2005, 150 Heads of State and Government attended the 60th GA Plenary meeting to review the MDGs and to consider the Secretary-General's proposal for UN reform, *In Larger Freedom*. The Pacific region's perspective on reforms required with the UN system reflect criticisms of the global South – concerning marginalization of the GA and ECOSOC, the financial role of UN, and the issue of representation in the Security Council. The Summit adopted the Outcome document with its focus on development, peace and collective security, human rights and the rule of law, and strengthening of the United Nations. Setting aside concerns about last minute amendments to the document, the Pacific States had a hand in ensuring that it included reference to SIDS and Least developed Countries, and reaffirms the need and resolve to help implement commitments in the Brussels Program of Action for the Least Developing Countries, the Mauritius Strategy, the Barbados Programme of Action and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly. The *Outcome* also noted the special adaptation needs of SIDS to effects of climate change and, that “cessation of the transport of radioactive materials through the regions of small island developing States is an ultimate desired goal of small island developing states and some other countries”.¹⁹

The Pacific and global society

Discussion in the paper thus far has focused on the activities of Pacific Island states in international organizations and development programme initiatives. An equally significant action with future consequences for the region and its standing in global affairs is the emigration of Pacific Islanders both within the Pacific region and beyond it, to metropolitan countries. “There are now some PICs that have more of their people living abroad than at home, and this emigration has fuelled considerable analysis concerning motivations for emigration and concerning impact on culture, politics, and economics. Economists point to the significance of remittances back to the island economies, but there is a warning that remittances by the first generation of migrants will not be equalled by those of subsequent generations. Recent figures suggest that Samoa's finances in 2010 were only secured through remittances.

How can contemporary Pacific societies best join global society? In addition to ties of migration, trade, education, and culture, institutional pathways include interaction with the United Nations and its many branches and agencies; the WTO; the Association for Small Islands States; and other organizations representing special needs and interests. In their post-colonial eras, Pacific states have extended trading relations with Australasia and Asia. With the formation of the European Union and with its subsequent relations with former colonies referred to as the “ACP” states, European trade and aid relations with the Pacific have become resurgent. Other important trade relationships are with China and other Asian economies.

There is also active civil society engagement in global movements of social action. But to what extent does active participation in such entities constitute full participation in the emerging global society and in democracy at global level? And can this participation restore the sense of loss, revive identity, and generate a sense of membership in global society? In the 70s and 80s the Independent and Free Pacific movement led by the Pacific Churches and NGOs successfully halted atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons by France. The funding support for such advocacy and attendance at international fora has shrunk and further compounded by the global financial crisis.

Pacific Islanders present their needs and advocate their interests through a great many non-governmental organizations, some focused on advocacy within the region and others on representation

¹⁹ (para. 56 (O)).

beyond it, and the presence of Pacific NGOs in global affairs is as large, if not larger, than that of official representation. One such regional organization is the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, established in 1991, which has nineteen national affiliates and which obtained accreditation with PIFS in 1997. PIANGO is also accredited to the Commonwealth Foundation and to the UN Department of Public Information NGO Liaison Programme. Between 2010 and 2011, PIANGO convened meetings in the Pacific region and contributed and actively participated in and nominated global Co-chair of the global CSO preparations for the OECD 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan in November 2011 and the resultant Busan Partnership Cooperation Agreement.

Twelve regional organizations make up the PRNGO Alliance (**PRNGO** - Pacific Regional Non-Governmental Organisations) which is Fiji based, and meet regularly to discuss issues of common concern.²⁰ In 2009 these NGOs collaborated on the Pacific Islands civil society position on climate change to present to the Copenhagen Summit.²¹

NGOs that operate with considerable drive include the Pacific Network on Globalization (PANG), which has focused in recent years on the equity of trade agreements such as PICTA and PACER (which involve Australia and New Zealand), the “Economic Partnership Agreements” (EPA - which the European Union has been seeking by the close of 2013 with all Pacific states as part of its ACP global strategy), and following Rio + 20 in 2012, the stance of regional organizations on sea-bed mining.

International political movements have sought to establish Pacific affiliates but with little success. Whilst the labor movement and green parties, for instance, have sought to cultivate Pacific affiliates, there has not been a systematic build-up of relations between political parties in the Pacific Islands and elsewhere. (Rich, Hambly et al. 2006) Pacific state and non-state actors participate actively in climate change treaty negotiations and advocacy. (Chasek 2010)

4. Conclusions

Scholarship on globalization and the Pacific Islands has often focused on the impact of globalization rather than on Pacific responses or Pacific solutions.²² No matter how vast the Pacific Ocean is physically, the region’s micro-states and their small populations and economies do not have great influence in world affairs. “Globalization” is viewed as a process that occurs around them and impacts on them. Local, regional, and global challenges confronting the region include meeting the rising aspirations of the younger generation; improving governance; resolving conflicts and maintaining peace and security; boosting economic growth and reducing population growth; negotiating with trade unions and achieving public sector reform; addressing human rights issues; responding to

²⁰ The twelve bodies are: Council of Pacific Educators (COPE), Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC), Foundations of the People of the South Pacific (FSPI), Greenpeace, Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW), Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC), Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO), Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), South Pacific Oceania Council of Trade Unions, Pacific Council of Churches (PCC), World Wide Fund (WWF), and Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG).

²¹ PRINGO Alliance (2009). "No Island Left Behind: Pacific Regional NGO Alliance Position on Climate Change." online at [http://www.ong-ngo.org/IMG/pdf/FINAL_PRNGO Alliance Pacific Position on Climate Change Rarotonga July 301.pdf](http://www.ong-ngo.org/IMG/pdf/FINAL_PRNGO_Alliance_Pacific_Position_on_Climate_Change_Rarotonga_July_301.pdf).

²² Firth, S. (2005). The Impact of Globalization on the Pacific Islands: Briefing paper for the 2nd South-East Asia and the Pacific Subregional Tripartite Forum on Decent Work, 5-8 April 2005, Melbourne, Australia. Geneva, International Labour Office. The Pacific islands Development Program at the East-West Center had an “Islands of Globalization” project that looked at perspectives on globalization from Oceania and the Caribbean. Crocombe took a broader view of the Pacific. Crocombe, R. (2007). Asia in the Pacific Islands: Replacing the West. Suva, Institute of Pacific Studies..

international organized crime and to the effects of climate change; establishing effective regional governance mechanisms; concluding regional trade agreements; achieving post-conflict peace-building; and improving outcomes in such crucial sectors as health, education, and agriculture. Modernization has signified for the Pacific a sense of loss as much as of progress; a sense of fragmentation as much as of integration. Globalization, in this perspective, threatens cultural identity and life-styles and increases the vulnerability of Pacific ecologies and economies: it represents threat rather than opportunity.

But Pacific Island states are not only recipients of international material and intellectual assistance: they are part of a creative process by asserting their needs and voicing their concerns in global policy-making fora. The Pacific contribution to the development of global democracy requires discourse in two directions – upwards from Pacific communities, reflecting needs, values, and experience, as well as downwards, conveying realities of the human condition on a global scale. The challenge is in overcoming the power-distance between the Pacific village, settlement, and town, and the global arenas in which development policy is often generated.

Appendix

Funds and Programs of the UN

There are some 14 Funds and Programmes established through GA or ECOSOC resolutions in response to needs in areas such as the environment, children in conflict-torn countries, crime, women and trade. There are also research and training institutes such as UN Research Institute for Social Development which aims to provide studies on the effect of development programs and policies on different social groups. Currently PICs are members of the UN Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which is open to all member states. Papua New Guinea is also a member of the Trade and Development Board. The main function of UNCTAD is to integrate developing countries into the world economy. One of the criticisms of UN is marginalization of its financial role, in particular of UNTAD and UNIDO. Papua New Guinea is also the only PIC to have served (in 1994) on the 36-member Executive Board of United Nations Development program (UNDP) and the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and twice (1977-85, 93-96) on the Governing Council of UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). PICs are, and have been present on the Governing Council of the UN Environment Program (UNEP). Tuvalu was a member (2004-07). Samoa and the Marshall Islands were members between 1996-2003, and Papua New Guinea was a member in 1983-88. As at 2005 Fiji focused its limited resources on participation WTO rather than UNCTAD.

Treaty Bodies

Special committees and bodies such as Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Human Rights Committee, International Seabed Authority (ISA), and various Secretariats, have been set up to monitor the implementation of treaties and conventions adopted by the GA. There are committees related to the Human Rights Treaty, the Law of the Sea Treaty and treaties, conventions and protocols on the environment. Membership of these bodies is made up of either experts such as lawyers on the Human Rights Committee or stakeholders such as on International Seabed Authority. For some, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, membership comprises of all Member States. Secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal is based in Geneva, but works closely with Regional Centres including the South Pacific Regional Environmental Program (SPREP).

In 2005 Fiji was the only Pacific country on a treaty-related committee (member of the Council of the International Seabed Authority and a Fiji Lawyer, Alfred Thomas Simpson is one of the 24 members of the Legal and Technical Commission). All PIC signatories to conventions such as the Basel Convention, or the Convention on biological diversity, are members of the Conference of Parties. All Pacific Countries, however, are members of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the financial mechanism of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, The Convention on Biological Diversity, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Convention to Combat Desertification. GEF works through UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank (implementing agencies of GEF), and other specialised UN agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization and regional development banks, including the Asian Development Bank to provide grants and concessional funding for projects and programmes on sustainable development. As signatories to relevant conventions, PICs are eligible for GEF funds. At the Thirty-Six Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Papua New Guinea (25-27 October 2005), Leaders agreed the need to “facilitate international financing for sustainable development, biodiversity and environmental protection and climate change in the Pacific including through the Global Environment Fund” (Paragraph 4 36th Pacific Island Forum Official Communiqué)

Specialized Agencies

These are autonomous intergovernmental organizations coordinated through ECOSOC and include the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture (FAO) Organization, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Universal Postal Union, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT).

	PIC members	PICs on Governing Boards (not including memberships by a Australia or New Zealand)
ILO	Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu	
FAO	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	
UNESCO	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Tokelau (associate member)	PNG, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu (2001-05), Fiji (2006-10)
WHO	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Tokelau (associate member)	Cook Islands, Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Tonga (current), Vanuatu
ICAO	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu	
IPU	Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	
ITU	Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, NZ, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	
WMO	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia, Niue, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu	Fiji
IMO	Australia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, NZ, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu	
WIPO	Fiji (B) , PNG (P), Samoa, Tonga (P B)	All members can participate in the Conference; Paris and Bern Union members can be elected to Coordination Committee
IFAD	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga	
UNIDO	Fiji, PNG, Tonga, Vanuatu	
WTO/OMT	Fiji	

International Bodies Related to the UN

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	Marshall Islands	
International Criminal Court	Parties to the Rome Statute	Judge Tuilomo Neroni Slade, Samoa (previous)
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu	
Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)		

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