



# HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Theme in 2018: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies**

SIDS Session – Pacific WASH Perspectives

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 9-11am

UN HQ

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**Guiding question 1: What enabling environment (legislative and institutional) is necessary for effective water governance in SIDS?**

**a. An enabling environment that supports local water governance (ie. thinks local!)**

- We shouldn't just think of enabling environments for water governance in SIDS at the *national government or water utility* levels (the discussion paper tends to focus in these areas).
- Pacific SIDS are home to growing communities with minimal access to government and private-sector services.
- For these communities drinking water, sanitation and hygiene are primarily managed at the *household, village or settlement level*.
- These communities face significant disparities in access to safe water and sanitation, and are expected to experience relatively high population growth rates.
- To meet SDG6 targets, support is required to better equip small communities to establish, operate and maintain appropriate water and sanitation facilities, while also maintaining safe drinking-water and hygiene practices in homes, schools and health facilities.
- ie. more needs to be done to *support local enabling environments* that empower small, isolated *and informal* communities to safely and sustainably manage their own drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene.

**b. An enabling environment that supports the role of women**

- Pacific women in rural areas are often responsible for household drinking-water management, sanitation and health promotion. As such, women have often accumulated considerable knowledge on water-source location, water quality and storage methods.
- A key part of any enabling environment for effective water governance in SIDS is the acknowledgement of, and harnessing, the central role of women in water resources management and safe water and hygiene.
- SPC's Pacific IWRM Programme advocated mainstreaming gender into IWRM and recommended that future programmes: commission project-specific gender analysis and gender action plans; strengthen gender-disaggregated data collection including qualitative and quantitative data; encourage the adoption of gender champions within national committees; support gender training and capacity-building at all levels; and ensure the continuous provision of gender inputs.

**c. An enabling environment that supports the development of real and lasting capacity**

- Pacific SIDS are generally constrained by small economies and serious challenges in building and retaining human resources. Solid capacity exists, but there's a lot of demand for it! SIDS in general, and the water sector particularly, struggle to maintain their home-grown capacity.
- Increased and sustained cooperation is required to strengthen the capacity of SIDS water professionals at the government, utility *and* community levels (think island water technicians and WASH caretakers).



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### d. An enabling environment that supports the development and sharing of solutions between SIDS.

- Don't forget the enabling environment at the regional level! It's important to harness the benefits of regionalism and the value of sharing knowledge, lessons and examples of success.
- When Pacific does regionalism, we do it well, and we have some great examples of Pacific SIDS sharing and improving upon successful approaches to common challenges with neighbours - effectively extending enabling environments across national boundaries.

**Guiding question 2: How can integrated water resources management be used to address impacts from climate change, improve overall water security, including re-use of wastewater, health and wellbeing.**

### a. Through the protection of SIDS' limited and fragile water resources

- For many Pacific SIDS, the availability of freshwater resources is confined to small and fragile groundwater lenses, streams and/or rainwater collected from roofs.
- These scarce resources are vulnerable to overexploitation and contamination, particularly in atoll environments, where limited potable groundwater sources can be threatened by over-pumping, land use activities, and inappropriate sanitation facilities.
- Efforts to achieve SDG6 must consider the water cycle as a whole, and use IWRM approaches from "ridge to reef" to protect the sustainability of fresh water resources (measures include water demand management, watershed management and pollution control).
- Similarly, sanitation solutions need to be sustainable, safe and not adversely impact limited and fragile water resources (noting that this may add to the cost of these solutions). The fragile ecological balance and water resources vulnerability in most Pacific SIDS requires rethinking of what is safe and adequate. On atoll islands, for instance, some "improved" sanitation technologies may be hazardous to sources of drinking-water and the environment.

### b. Through increasing resilience to climate variability

- Pacific SIDS are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate variability and change, and are subject to a relatively high frequency of climate-related natural hazards such as cyclones, floods and drought.
- Achieving water security through today's varying climatic conditions and tomorrow's climate change requires the use of all available water sources, including rainwater, groundwater, surface water, and in some cases desalinated supply.
- The resilience of Pacific SIDS relies on maintaining the sustainability of a variety of water sources in the face of ongoing climate and disaster challenges.
- Safe and sustainable water and sanitation solutions are vital to strengthening and maintaining the resilience of Pacific communities to the increasing threats of climate variability, climate change and natural hazards.

### c. Through moving from a paradigm of disaster response to one of hazard assessment and risk management

- The region's response to climate and disaster risk must address the underlying challenges for water and sanitation. By strengthening the capacity of Pacific SIDS to better deal with these challenges, adaptation strategies can improve responses to climate variability, natural hazards and the impacts of climate change.



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- Pacific island countries acknowledge the critical importance of water and sanitation in disaster response, as demonstrated in recent record-breaking disasters such as tropical cyclone Pam in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu and tropical cyclone Winston in Fiji.
- However, countries also recognise that more needs to be done to move from a paradigm of disaster response to one of hazard assessment and risk management. In this regard, the role of the water and sanitation sector is crucial.
- SPC's dialogue with Pacific water and disaster managers has confirmed the critical role of the water and sanitation sector in assisting countries to assess, manage and adapt to the impacts of climate variability, climate change and natural hazards. Managing the water-related impacts of natural disasters, climate variability and climate change requires a risk-based approach, and integration of effective risk-reduction strategies across all sectors.

### Finally, a plug for increased water and sanitation investment in Pacific SIDS....

- Meeting SDG6 isn't all about monetary investment, but it sure is important and at the moment it's not enough...
- The general lack of development of the water and sanitation sector in the Pacific region can be attributed to water governance issues *and* a lack of prioritisation of sector investments.
- Meaningful progress towards SDG6 will require a fundamental recalibration of efforts by Pacific island countries and development partners, ensuring that policy commitments made by Pacific island countries be converted into serious and sufficient investments going forward.
- The infrastructure cost of achieving universal coverage of basic drinking-water supply throughout the Pacific by 2030 is about US\$ 83 million per annum (approximately 0.35% of the region's GDP). Similarly the infrastructure cost of achieving universal coverage of adequate sanitation by 2030 is about US\$ 80 million per annum (0.33% of the region's GDP).
- The cost of inaction is significant. Hutton (2012) estimated the economic losses associated with lack of improved drinking-water and sanitation services to be about 1.6% of the region's GDP. A recent study on the costs of inadequate drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in South Tarawa, Kiribati, found an economic cost per annum equivalent to 2-4% of the 2013 GDP.
- Achieving the new targets requires increased government and development partner resources, working in coordination and complemented by updated sector policies and effective service-delivery strategies.

### And just for your reference...the SDG6 targets are:

**Target 6.1:** By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking-water for all.

**Target 6.2:** By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.



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**Target 6.3:** By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimising release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.

**Target 6.4:** By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.

**Target 6.5:** By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

**Target 6.6:** By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.

**Target 6a:** By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies.

**Target 6b:** Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.