



**PACIFIC ISLANDS  
FORUM SECRETARIAT**

## **LISTENING TO THE PACIFIC**

**FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM  
REGIONAL INITIATIVE SUBMISSION TEMPLATE 2016**



## FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM – REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

*Please complete each section below.*

### 1. Contact Details

*Please provide the following contact details:*

**Name of individual or group submitting initiative**

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

**Name and position of primary contact**

Lisa Beech, Advocacy and Research Manager

**Email address**

**Phone number**

**Fax number**

**Mailing address**

### 2. Name of Initiative

Ensuring that climate finance adaptation funds reach the most vulnerable Pacific communities.



### 3. What is the common regional issue or challenge that this regional initiative aims to address?

*You may also want to address the following: What are the causes of this issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?*

*Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.*

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand has undertaken research on how environmental issues affect our partners and networks throughout the Pacific region, which we have reported on in our 2014 foundational report: [Small yet strong: Voices from Oceania on the environment](#) and our first state of the environment in Oceania 2015 report [Caring for our common home](#)

One of our key concerns is that despite the increasingly large sums of money made available for climate finance, this is not reaching some of the most vulnerable communities in our region, who are already living with significant impacts of climate change in the form of loss of homes from sea level rise, loss of food and water supplies, and increasingly unliveable conditions resulting from the impact of severe weather emergencies.

The 2015 OECD report on climate finance confirmed that most climate funds are going into mitigation measures, and this is also a key aspect of bilateral and multilateral aid funding. There are some significant and important mitigation programmes in the Pacific, such as provision of renewable energy schemes, and we support this.

However, we are concerned that while this development is taking place, insufficient priority is being given to supporting the initiatives of communities who are already having to adapt to significant environmental change. For example, communities in the Carteret Islands who are moving to the mainland have insufficient funds to rehouse all those who need and wish to move. Other communities throughout the Pacific are facing similar situations – the [Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania](#) last year gave examples of other communities under threat including the Fead Islands, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Mortlock Islands, Nukumanu Islands, the Tokelau islands and Tuvalu. While some of these are well known examples, others are less well known. And within our region there are numerous vulnerable communities who are moving their own villages, building their own sea walls by hand with sticks and stones, rebuilding their livelihoods, and preparing for an unknown future without external support.

Our experience is that there is insufficient information and long term planning about the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable communities, and climate finance is not prioritised towards their adaptation needs.

### 4. Briefly describe this regional initiative

*You may also want to address the following in this section:*

*How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?*

*Who are the main beneficiaries?*

*How would the initiative contribute to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?*

*Has the initiative been carried out previously?*

*What are the key risks in implementing this initiative?*

*Are there any complementary projects and programmes that are currently active?*

*Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.*



There needs to be a strong regional focus on:

- Research and mapping of the most vulnerable communities and regions
- Ensuring that climate finance for the adaptation of these communities is a regional priority
- Advocating for a greater share of world climate finance to meet the needs of the most affected communities in the Pacific

This would meet a lack of clear information about the long term impacts on particular communities and regions, and help to target aid and climate finances towards the most affected and most vulnerable communities. The key beneficiaries of this would be the women, men and children living most acutely with the impacts of climate change throughout our region.

This links with the priority expressed in the 2015 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Declaration on Climate Change Action, particularly paragraph 11 (g) and (i) which called for “accelerated and effective delivery of international support for the design and implementation of adaption and mitigation actions especially for the most vulnerable communities” and for “simplified access to financial resources to support climate change action and resilience”.

This also links to the objectives in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism for sustainable development and security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all.

## **5. Why does this initiative require the attention of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum?**

*Please consider whether this initiative requires the attention and consideration of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in order to be implemented and outline why this is the case. Could it not be overseen or implemented at the level of Ministers, officials or by a regional agency?*

*Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.*

We appreciate the commitment of donor countries within our region to supporting Pacific climate mitigation policies. However, we are concerned that current NZ and Australian climate finance does not sufficiently prioritise adaptation needs of the most affected communities. In some cases, we see climate finance going to “business as usual” activities such as tourist jetties and airports (as outlined in our 2015 report) while communities in need are unsupported.

We believe this needs a regional approach, because the scale and scope of our region means that some of the most vulnerable and affected communities are very isolated. Despite our research and advocacy focus on the impact of climate change on Pacific communities, it appears to us that there is no comprehensive analysis of the impact of climate change on the people of our region, including predictions of anticipated loss of coastal land, and measurement of the impact of the loss of food and water supplies.

The Pacific region is best placed to prioritise and ensure funds are directed towards the most vulnerable and affected communities. We believe the Pacific Islands Forum is an appropriate place to consider and find a way forward on regional prioritisation of adaptation needs.

We will also forward a hard copy of this submission, together with copies of our 2014 and 2015 Pacific environmental reports to the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat.