



Pacific Perspective

Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Dame Meg Taylor

2020 has been an incredible year for us as a region and indeed the entire world.

It has also been, perhaps, one of the most challenging years of my tenure as Secretary General but one that we have seen through innovatively and successfully.

2020 has reaffirmed the importance of regional and international solidarity, cooperation and collaboration, most especially in the face of a global catastrophe such as the COVID-19 pandemic. It has also offered us the rare and yet valuable opportunity, as individual states and collectively as a region, to reflect and critically review our approach to development and the partnerships we engage in to advance our interests and priorities.

As a Secretariat, our primary focus throughout 2020 has been to maintain our engagement with all Forum Members and to ensure that we are able to continue to deliver effectively for our Member States. Accordingly, we reviewed and revised our work programme to incorporate COVID-19 recovery in our work streams and have capitalised on the opportunity of digital technologies to maintain close communication and collaboration with our Members and Partners.

Despite the circumstances that we have had to face this year, including the closure of the Secretariat Offices for three months and the initiation of remote working modalities, we have been able to progress a significant amount of work, including the convening of the standing Forum Meetings and the Forum Trade Ministers Meeting; establishment of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19; progress on the development of the 2050 Strategy; progress on the work programme on the development of international law in the face of sea level rise; and the endorsement of the transitional arrangements for the Pacific Resilience Facility, to name a few.

I am very proud of the work that we at the Secretariat have been able to deliver for the Members over 2020 and I am very proud of the Secretariat staff who continue to work to ensure that we are able to deliver.

Yes, it has been a challenging year but it has, in some sense, strengthened our resolve as one Secretariat Team to continue to serve the Member Countries of the Blue Pacific to the best of our abilities, and for this I am thankful.

I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and best wishes for the year to come.

COVID-19 response and recovery



Invoking Biketawa, launching a Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19

"We must come out of this pandemic more unified, safe, and resilient."

Kausea Natano, Prime Minister of Tuvalu and Pacific Islands Forum Chair, speaking at UNGASS on December 3, 2020

Our leaders place the health and wellbeing of the Pacific peoples and Ocean as our greatest priority. We took bold actions to restrict COVID-19's spread to and within our region, enforcing unprecedented containment measures. Two-thirds of our Member States remain COVID-19 free, the only countries in the world to do so from the onset of the pandemic. While our measures have saved countless lives, they severely restricted our links to each other and the world.

[Read more](#)

Kainaki II to COP 26



The Kainaki II Declaration is the most comprehensive and ambitious climate change declaration issued by all 18 Forum Leaders. Today, as we look towards COP26 in Glasgow, we reaffirm our call for urgent climate change action, now.

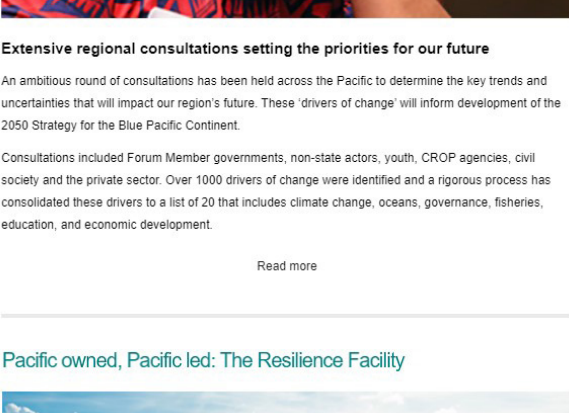
Pacific High Level Roundtable keeps up the pressure

With COP26 in mind, Forum Leaders hosted a high level virtual global roundtable with Dialogue Partners on December 11, marking five years since the Paris Agreement.

"Our whole Blue Planet is facing an unprecedented global catastrophe. And for us here in the Pacific, the situation is becoming dire" said Lionel Aingimea, President of Nauru. "The shared prosperity and security of our Blue Pacific can only safely exist if we are fully committed to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius within this decade."

[Read more](#)

Oceans: securing the limits of our Blue Pacific



Ensuring our maritime zones cannot be challenged or reduced

Our Leaders have made a commitment to securing the Blue Pacific despite the threat posed by sea level rise. They have committed to conclude negotiations on maritime boundary claims and zones through collective action and international law.

The Regional Conference on Securing the Limits of the Blue Pacific was held in September 2020 with key partners including the Pacific Community. It identified collective legal options and institutional responses to secure the limits of the Blue Pacific.

[Read more](#)

2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent



Extensive regional consultations setting the priorities for our future

An ambitious round of consultations has been held across the Pacific to determine the key trends and uncertainties that will impact our region's future. These 'drivers of change' will inform development of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

Consultations included Forum Member governments, non-state actors, youth, CROP agencies, civil society and the private sector. Over 1000 drivers of change were identified and a rigorous process has consolidated these drivers to a list of 20 that includes climate change, oceans, governance, fisheries, education, and economic development.

[Read more](#)

Pacific owned, Pacific led: The Resilience Facility



The Pacific Resilience Facility is more than a major disaster readiness facility helping Forum members to future proof and lower disaster risk. Pacific owned and Pacific led, it allows us to prepare, not just respond.

"Pacific people know resilience, for without it, we would not be here" begins an op-ed by Forum Secretary General, Dame Meg Taylor.

"We have endured disasters on a recurring basis since the first navigators to this region explored and settled our sea of islands. Now, that endurance is being further tested as climate change exacerbates storms, flooding and other hazards that are harsher, more frequent and less predictable. Climate change impacts and natural disasters have destroyed lives and livelihoods across our Blue Pacific continent and has reset the clock on decades of hard-fought development gains in nation building."

[Read more](#)

Trade priorities in response to COVID-19

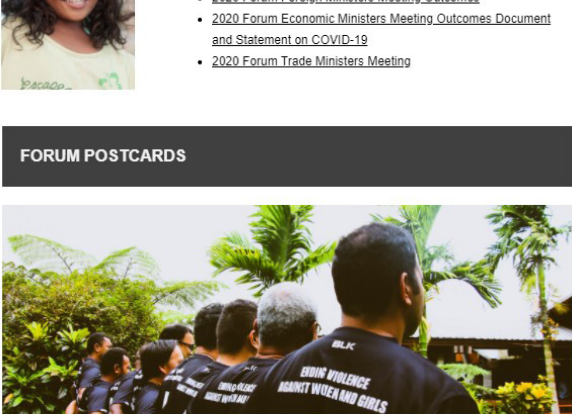


COVID-19 has created economic turmoil in most Forum member countries, magnifying existing challenges but also creating opportunities.

Trade technical assistance, resource mobilization, coordination, advocacy and promotion work has been reprioritized in response to the negative effects of the pandemic. The key focus areas are e-commerce and quality infrastructure, two components of the Pacific Aid-for-Trade Strategy 2020-2025.

[Read more](#)

Fisheries: the multi-billion dollar industry so vital to our Pacific



In 2015, Forum Leaders directed that an increase in economic returns from fisheries be achieved in five years.

This year an independent review has begun to track progress, overseen by a working group of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, the Pacific Community and the Office of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNAO).

Recently a webinar was held, part of the Blue Pacific Talanoa series, discussing tuna profits, regional cooperation, foreign investment, onshore processing and traceability.

[Listen to the webinar](#)

SDGs: 2020 Biennial Report does not sugar-coat our Pacific reality

The Pacific Biennial Report for the Sustainable Development Goals has been launched.

Despite some significant achievements and milestones, it confirms slow progress on our development targets in the Pacific. We face increasing vulnerabilities and deepening inequalities, more so now as we navigate this pandemic. Our partnerships both within the region and with international development agencies and development partners will be crucial to delivering coherent, coordinated and targeted development support to Pacific Countries.

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Global and Regional Treaties

35 years ago, 13 Pacific nations united and created a nuclear free zone

"Notwithstanding the overall reduction in nuclear weapon arsenals since the time the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty was adopted, we note with concern that as of the beginning of 2020, it is reported that nine states (the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea – DPRK) possessed approximately 13,400 nuclear weapons. Approximately 1,800 of these are kept in a state of high operational alert"

Ministerial Statement: First meeting of states parties to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, 15 December 2020.

[Read more](#)

IN THE MIX



MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

Key Ministerial meetings in 2020 continued virtually. A special Forum Leaders Retreat will be held early in 2021.

- [2020 Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting Outcomes](#)
- [2020 Forum Economic Ministers Meeting Outcomes Document and Statement on COVID-19](#)
- [2020 Forum Trade Ministers Meeting](#)

FORUM POSTCARDS

The Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls has been active throughout 2020 and enjoys staff support across CROP.