



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

## Large Ocean States: Partnering towards a resilient future

### CONTEXT OF THE PACIFIC

Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are only responsible for 0.03% of global greenhouse gas emissions, but are disproportionately facing many of the threats of climate change. Together, they cover 65,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land and have a combined population of 2.54 million people dispersed over 15 percent of the Earth's surface. Despite their diverse economic, social, and political landscapes, Pacific SIDS share common characteristics due to the nature of small island states. These include heavy dependence on imports, scattered populations across vast distances, and susceptibility to the effects of extreme

weather events driven by climate change, which put a strain on the ability of their governments to provide services in response to emergencies.

Of the 20 countries with the highest average annual disaster losses scaled by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), eight are Pacific Islands. Of the 22 most vulnerable countries in the world according to the ND-Gain, six are Pacific Islands. Pacific-wide, average annual temperatures have increased at an average rate of 0.18°C per decade since 1961, with the expectation and recent experience that seasons are changing and that hazards are becoming more frequent and intense.

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For the people of the Pacific, climate change is an existential threat that can lead to the risk of displacement and migration for families and communities across the region. Half the population of the Pacific lives within 10km of the coast where sea-level rise, coastal erosion and saline intrusion are prevalent, increasing the risk of displacement, loss of homes, loss of livelihoods and loss of traditional lands/ heritage.

The Pacific Island region is on the frontline of the impacts of climate change. Many of the region's islands are low-lying, with some of them atoll islands and others that rise only a few feet above sea-level. The current pace of sea-level rise threatens these low-lying island systems with flooding, coastal erosion and storm surges.

Pacific Island Countries and communities in coastal and maritime zones are expected to experience a predicted average sea level rise of between 25 cm – 58 cm by the middle of this century. This would be devastating for islands that sit at or just above, sea level. If global temperatures increase 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, as is becoming increasingly likely, it is estimated that 90% of the coral reefs in much of the Pacific Island region could suffer severe degradation, which will have a devastating effect on the marine species that depend upon these ecosystems.

Climate change is affecting fisheries and many threatened marine species in the Pacific Islands and this impact is expected to worsen. The impact of sea-level rise over the next few decades could see groundwater sources being permanently lost, with islands becoming unstable in the second half of this century, exposing many Pacific Island communities to intolerable levels of risk.

In addition to these challenges, the lifestyle and diet of the rapidly growing urban populations in the Pacific are driving an increase in imports of energy-dense, nutritionally poor foods. These imports are replacing traditional foods for several reasons, including low cost and convenience, rural people migrating to towns, lack of access to land for growing food, increases in disposable income of urban dwellers, and lack of awareness of the consequences of poor nutrition. The toll on Pacific Island urban populations has already been huge: Pacific Island nations comprise 9 of the 10 countries in the world with the highest rates of overweight and obesity, and 7 of the 10 countries with the highest rates of diabetes.

Pacific Island leadership has prioritised adapting to climate change as a matter of survival, and in recent years have begun to take on global leadership around climate change advocacy, having successfully obtained high levels of attention to the plight of SIDS in the Pacific. Pacific SIDS have been recognized as key players in global climate



policy and Pacific Island leadership has also amplified the Pacific voice on the global stage.

At their 2019 meeting in Tuvalu, Pacific Island Forum Leaders endorsed the development of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. Leaders highlighted their concerns for the region's challenges such as climate change related impacts, coupled with the intensification of geostrategic competition, exacerbating the region's existing vulnerabilities.

The **WFP Pacific Multi-Country Office**, guided by its Multi-country Strategic Plan (MCSP), works with 14 diverse Pacific SIDS, including many ranked the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Many of these countries are also the least prepared due to limited capacity and resource availability.

## WHAT IS WFP DOING TO SUPPORT PACIFIC PEOPLE TO BECOME MORE RESILIENT?

### RESEARCH, ASSESSMENTS AND MONITORING

Data collection and analysis: WFP works with PICT governments to predict and assess the impact of climate shocks on food security and nutrition, especially for groups at risk of being left behind, and to better plan and finance their responses. Since 2021, WFP has conducted mVAM in five Pacific nations and is looking to expand to more Pacific countries in 2024. WFP has conducted market assessments to assist decision makers plan for response modalities and ensure the differentiated impacts of shocks on women, people with disabilities and other groups at risk of being left behind, are assessed.

Data dashboards and training: WFP understand the importance of generating evidence for effective decision-making. We work closely with Ministries of Agriculture and National Statistics Offices to design and deliver training to strengthen country capacities to effectively collect, analyse and visualise data for decision makers. WFP provides training on Excel, Kobotoolbox, data visualisations, disaster assessments, GIS and the use of statistical software tools.

### ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY AND FOOD INSECURITY

As co-lead of the regional Pacific Food Security Cluster, WFP works closely with partners and government agencies to strengthen their ability to collect, analyse and disseminate food security data to inform disaster



preparedness and response actions. In response to the drought in Kiribati in 2022, for example, WFP supported the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development by designing a sector-specific needs assessment form and providing enumerator training for ministry staff, as well as providing tablets to support assessments.

As part of the overall agenda to support food system transformation in the Pacific, WFP promotes resilient local food production and consumption through partnerships with Ministries of Agriculture, as well as through supporting healthy diets, especially with high-risk groups, through working closely with the UN and Ministry of Health and partners in the region.

WFP conducts extensive regional food security vulnerability analysis and mapping, including mobile Vulnerability Assessment Mapping, rapid-assessment training workshops, development of standard operating procedures and the compilation of food-security data sets and profiles for each Pacific Island country.

To maximise our reach and impact on vulnerable Pacific islanders, WFP works closely to strengthen government social protection systems in the region. With a particular focus on women and people with disabilities, WFP provides technical assistance to support the design and development of gender-responsive, inclusive and equitable, adaptive social protection systems that build on informal social protection mechanisms and promote nutrition and resilient food systems. A recent key initiative includes developing anticipatory cash transfers to social welfare beneficiaries before a cyclone through an Anticipatory Action pilot in Fiji. WFP has also supported parametric micro insurance to social welfare beneficiaries for cyclones and excess rainfall events in Fiji.

WFP works to enhance access to climate and disaster risk financing systems that anticipate and mitigate the impact of shocks and disasters on the most vulnerable populations. WFP in the Pacific works with the Pacific regional risk pool to develop their capacity, as well as to ensure coverage for those at risk of drought and cyclones.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

At the request of Pacific governments, WFP Pacific works to develop the capacity and knowledge of national authorities, staff and stakeholders at country level, to coordinate, design and lead preparedness, anticipation, response and resilience actions in its cluster-led areas of logistics, food security and emergency telecommunications.



### Supply chain and emergency telecommunications -

Governments and regional stakeholders in the Pacific benefit from strengthened emergency preparedness and response capacity in supply chain management and emergency telecommunications that supports integrated risk management.

**Emergency needs assessments** - WFP provides technical support to NDMOs, national clusters and other relevant national actors in their efforts to improve data preparedness, including disaster assessments, geographic information systems, mapping and other data-based support as required, especially in the early stages of emergency responses.

## SUPPORT TO GOVERNMENT RESPONSES IN EMERGENCIES

WFP supports the planning of emergency facilities, identifying and addressing shortfalls and national-level logistics capacity assessments. Its Pacific Emergency and Response Logistics project standardizes humanitarian logistics training, while the Pacific Logistics Mapping platform provides regional humanitarian coordination. To support the COVID-19 pandemic response, WFP provided warehousing support and operated the Pacific Humanitarian Air Service.

WFP works together with the National Disaster Management Offices in logistics coordination and planning staff (surge capacity) as part of the government response teams. Through the Pacific Logistics Cluster and as a last

resort, WFP has the capacity to offer Humanitarian Air Services (PHAS), Emergency Tele-Communications and Logistics support to governments, emergency responders and affected populations to fill identified gaps in support of timely and coordinated emergency responses.

## COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

**Food Security Cluster coordination:** WFP works with national governments to strengthen their capacity to respond to climate change and other shocks that affect food security and nutrition. WFP co-leads the regional food security cluster and provides technical support to national food security clusters and working groups that include Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries, NDMOs, and civil society in the development of strategies, activities and tools for improved emergency preparedness and response capacity.

**Cash Working Groups:** WFP provides technical support to regional and national cash working groups to build cash preparedness in the region. Strengthening cash as a preparedness and response modality promotes greater efficiencies, strengthens local markets and supports governments and partners promote healthy diets especially among the most affected groups.

WFP also leads and coordinates the [Pacific Logistics Cluster](#) and the [Emergency Telecommunications Cluster](#). The core functions of these clusters are to complement and support regional and national disaster response and preparedness arrangements:

**Pacific Logistics Cluster (PLC):** As part of preparedness efforts, the PLC enhance humanitarian supply chain preparedness and the response of National Disaster Management Agencies (NDMOs) and other Government agencies to coordinate sub-regional and national humanitarian supply chains effectively and to be more resilient in responding to sudden onset disasters. In the event of a disaster, the PLC provides upon request support to fill gaps in national coordination, information management and common logistics services such as air transport.

**Emergency Telecommunications (ETC)** WFP focuses on capacity strengthening and promoting the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster within national disaster management structures across the region. This is done through providing support for the development of national emergency telecommunication plans and knowledge and skill development via targeted training and workshops. WFP supports Pacific countries by providing technical advice and equipment, and by deploying personnel across the region.