

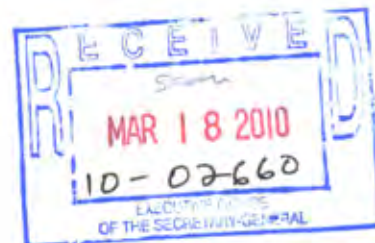
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UNITED NATIONS



NATION UNIES

THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM'S OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT



UNDP / Res. Coord

08 March 2010

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

On behalf of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) based in Suva (Fiji), I am pleased to present to you the Resident Coordinator's Annual Report for 2009. The UN Agencies in the Pacific continued to strengthen its coordination of Country Programme Action Plans and biennial programmes of work to effectively support efforts by Pacific Island Governments to achieve their national goals and priorities as underpinned by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and human rights of all their citizens. The Suva and Apia-based UNCTs continued to work together to implement their common UNDAF (2008-2012) covering 14 Pacific Island Countries. This UNDAF is based on priorities highlighted in the 14 national development strategies, the Pacific Plan promoting regional integration and cooperation and other related regional strategies. The UN Joint Presences and its support to annual joint Pacific Island Governments/UN consultations were a major highlight of the collaboration.

1. Political Situation in the Pacific

- ♦ **Fiji:** Political uncertainty remains in Fiji. The Government, under the leadership of Commodore Bainimarama, remains in full control of all the governance machinery in the country. On 10 April 2009, Former President Ratu Iloilo abrogated the 1997 Constitution following the Court of Appeal's declaration that the December 2006 coup was unlawful. Following the abrogation of the Constitution, a Public Emergency Regulations (PER) was declared and continues to exist. The Government continues to rule by Presidential Decrees. Fiji's was subsequently suspended from the Pacific Islands Forum (PIFs) on 1 May 2009. It was also fully suspended from membership of the Commonwealth on 1 September 2009. On 1 July, Prime Minister Bainimarama in a national address outlined his roadmap for Fiji's return to democracy through the 'Strategic Framework for Change' and made clear that the intended new legal framework would be based on the provisions of the People's Charter. The Prime Minister also announced that a new Constitution will be formulated in 2012 and should be in place by 2013. National elections under the new constitution will then be held by September 2014. On 3 November 2009, the Fiji Government expelled the Australian and New Zealand High Commissioners from Suva. Fiji's relations with Australia and New Zealand remains strained following the military coup of 2006. Fiji's Foreign Minister, Ratu Inoke Kubuabola continues to engage in regular dialogue with his Australian and NZ counterparts with a view to rebuild the diplomatic relations between the three countries. The UN RC maintains a close watch on ongoing developments in Fiji and is supported by a Peace & Development

UN Agencies based in the Pacific:

FAO, ILO, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNDSS, UNEP, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNFPA,
UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNISDR, UNOCHA, WHO & WMO

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Adviser, providing advice and support to the RC and UNCT on UN engagement and assistance to Government, political parties, civil society, and other stakeholders in society.

- ♦ **Solomon Islands:** In March 2009, the cabinet signalled its intention of introducing significant political reforms with the release of its white paper on the proposed Political Party Integrity Bill and other electoral and political reforms before the next general elections in mid-2010. But progress has stalled, and it is unlikely that the most important reforms will be implemented before the next parliamentary election. The forthcoming elections will be held on any date between 24 July and 18 August 2010. On 29 April, the Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was officially launched. The Commission's main objective is to promote reconciliation and bring together the aggrieved parties who fought against each other and the civilians affected, during the 1998-2003 conflict. UNDP is providing financial and technical support to the work of the TRC. RAMSI has successfully restored law and order and has established a strong and positive working relationship with the current Government of Prime Minister Derek Sikua. The forthcoming 2010 elections will be the country's third post-conflict elections and the UN has been requested to assist in coordinating international observers. The UN is preparing to provide electoral assistance in this regard.
- ♦ **Vanuatu:** The coalition Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Edward Natapei has survived 5 Parliament votes of no-confidence in 2009. The opposition will continue to seize any opportunity to remove the Government before the end of its four-year term in 2012. The Government in collaboration with the UN recently hosted a successful pan Pacific Meeting on the Global Economic Crisis. The UNDP Administrator and the Executive Director of ESCAP attended the Conference.
- ♦ **Tonga:** The Constitutional and Electoral Commission submitted its report on political reforms in November 2009, with the intention that a new political system will be in place for the 2010 general elections. The Commission's report and recommendations has proposed significant changes to the role of the Monarchy, the composition of Parliament and the wider democratisation process with wide implications on the Kingdom's current political landscape.
- ♦ **Kiribati:** The country in July celebrated its 30th anniversary of independence with the theme "Sustainable growth to Kiribati through self commitment". The President spoke passionately about climate change and its impact on his small atoll country at the 2nd Session of Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction Conference in Geneva in 16-19 June 2009, and during the UN General Assembly session in October.
- ♦ **Republic of Marshall Islands:** The Government survived a vote of no confidence in April but was defeated by another one in late October. A New President and Speaker of Parliament were elected in early November 2009.

2. Highlights on progress in UN Reform

The innovative UNDAF processes from 2006-08, aligning the work of the two UNCTs, improving the coordination practices and creating a significantly greater outreach to PICs, were further deepened in 2009 with good results in a number of areas based on the first two years of UNDAF implementation.

- ♦ **The Pacific Conference on Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis (GEC) in February 2010:** Since the last quarter of 2009, both UNCTs Samoa and Fiji worked closely with the Vanuatu government and other organizing partners such as Asian Development Bank, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, University of South Pacific & Pacific Island Forum Secretariat to assist in the preparation of the Pacific Conference on Human Face of the GEC which took place from 10-12 February in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The Conference was an outcome of the 40th Pacific Islands Forum held in Cairns in August 2009 when leaders endorsed the need for countries to develop effective policy measures and practical responses to address the effects of the global crisis, reduce vulnerability and build sustained resilience to future shocks. The conference resulted in a greater understanding of how the global crisis is affecting PICs both at macro and community/household levels; through information sharing and lessons from past crises, it identified



a range of policy responses to better mitigate the impact of the crisis; and countries committed to protect vulnerable groups (women, children, disabled, etc) during the current and future crises. It was held back to back with the ILO Regional Meeting on decent Work and ESCAP hosted Mauritius Strategy for Implementation for Small Island States +5 Review meeting. This was the first time such regional high profile meetings have been held in the Pacific with high level participation from the UN system, the other development partners and leaders from the Pacific to assess the challenges faced by the region and to map out strategies to spur development amid the current global crises.

- ◆ **Joint Presences:** The Tuvalu Joint Presence (JP) was officially launched in May by the President and the UN RC; UNDP preparations are on-going for Nauru JP launch in mid-2010. The Joint Presence offices are already playing a vital role in strengthened communications between UN and the host Governments as well as other implementing partners on the ground and for improving delivery of UN's development and humanitarian assistance. Several of the presences are spearheading design of joint UN programmes in areas such as local governance, MDG monitoring and Gender Based Violence. In addition, it is expected that Joint UN Presences will support respective Pacific island governments in strengthening their aid management systems and overall aid effectiveness. Three Country Development Managers underwent DOCO induction courses for coordination officers.
- ◆ **Kiribati One UN Fund established – Piloting 'Delivering as One' in the Pacific:** ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNFPA, and WHO are partners in this initiative. A One UN Fund mechanism was established in July 2009 with the UNDP MDTF Office as the Administrative Agent (AA). It received an amount of US\$500,000 from the Expanded Delivering as One Funding Window in August 2009 and the above seven agencies submitted various proposals for funding which were later endorsed by the Government of Kiribati. Bilateral discussions are on-going with development partners for resource mobilisation with an aim to expanding the Kiribati One UN Fund mechanism for future.
- ◆ **Annual Joint UN (country level) consultations in 4 LDCs plus 3 North Pacific Island countries:** UN agencies conducted a full set of annual consultations in the four LDCs in the Pacific (Mid-year reviews, technical consultations and Joint Strategy Meetings approving Annual Work Plans) from October–December as done in the previous year.
- ◆ **UNCT Fiji & Samoa Joint Meetings:** Both UNCTs had several joint meetings via teleconference and video conference to review the UNDAF implementation and discuss joint issues and regional events relating to the Pacific Island countries.
- ◆ **Humanitarian Responses to Natural Disasters in the Pacific:** The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) had a high level of activity in 2009 considering the number of natural disasters in the Pacific region during the year. Starting with Fiji floods in early January, there were several natural disasters.
 - Heavy rain resulting from a tropical depression caused severe flooding in the North, Central and Western Divisions of the main Island of Fiji. Nation-wide 11 fatalities occurred, including two deaths from flood related landslides. The PHT in close collaboration with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) assisted in the immediate relief assistance. UNDP in partnership with Pacific islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and Fiji Red Cross Society helped the government do the damage assessments and developing a long-term early recovery framework.
 - Floods in Guadalcanal Province in Solomon Islands in February 2009 killed more than a dozen people and swept several villages in the area. The PHT worked closely with the NDMO to provide relief assistance to the affected communities.
 - In March 2009 a new active period of eruption of Ambrym Volcano, Malampa Province, in Vanuatu prompted an international response to support the Vanuatu Government and local partners. A population of 9,000 on the island in 40 rural villages were at risk with 4,000 in the western half of the island directly affected. Contamination of drinking water and food gardens from the volcano's ash and gas emissions are a priority concern. The UN Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) with responsibilities within both the 'Health and Nutrition' and the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene or 'WASH' clusters, the World Health Organization (WHO) offered - in close cooperation with UNICEF,



UNOCHA and other PHT partners - to field an expert on environmental health and water quality. The expert advised the Government and local partners on the immediate risks and the possible ways to mitigate the negative impacts on health from the volcanic discharges - and from the contaminated air, food and water in particular. The expert also proposed medium-to-long-term actions to make safe food, drinking water and sanitation available, and shared those findings and recommendations with the Government in order to support planning for repeat events on Ambrym (as well as Vanuatu's other active volcanoes).

- The tsunami in Tonga on 30 September killed nine people, made around 1,000 people homeless and an estimated 90% of homes on the island were destroyed in the northern island of Niuatoputapu. The UN RC with an inter-agency UN team visited the tsunami damaged area and helped coordinate immediate relief with other development partners. The UN Team also supported the government coordination with a cluster approach and helped prepare an early recovery strategy.
- Cyclone Mick hit Fiji on 14 December 2009 and caused 4 reported deaths. The UN Pacific Humanitarian Team assisted the NDMO with cluster coordination and immediate relief assistance and initial damage assessments.
- ♦ **Preparations for Disaster Response:** The Pacific Islands Emergency and Disaster Management Workshop was held in May in Solomon Islands in conjunction with Solomon Island NDMO and OCHA in collaboration with UNHCR eCentre where 36 emergency responders from Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand with the goal of raising standards and sharing best practices in responding to humanitarian emergencies. A similar inter-agency contingency planning workshop was held in Port Villa, Vanuatu from 16-18 September.
- A logistics scoping mission took place in February 2009 led by WFP Regional Office in Bangkok to look into options of creating a logistics cluster in the PHT (as WFP is not physically present in the Pacific). The mission recommended WFP in its role as Logistics Cluster Lead should join the Disaster Coordination Hub consisting of UNOCHA and ISDR (UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) based in Fiji for an initial two years.
- A regional Pacific Humanitarian Team Workshop was organised by OCHA in early December in Fiji to prepare for various scales/levels of disasters and their preparedness and responses. The regional meeting was based on the disaster response experiences in 2008-2009 including high sea swells, Fiji flood, Guadalcanal floods, Ambrym volcano & flood, Samoa & Tonga tsunami as well as the outcomes of Inter agency contingency planning workshop held in Solomon, Samoa and Vanuatu.
- ♦ **Disaster Risk Reduction:** The 2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction with the thematic focus on "Risk and Poverty in a Changing Climate" (released by UN Secretary-General in May 2009) was launched in the Pacific region by UNISDR in collaboration with (SOPAC) at its Governing Council Meeting on 27 October 2009 in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The launch was attended by senior Government officials of Pacific island countries, Australia and New Zealand, and representatives of the UN Country Team, and civil society. The Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management was co-convened by UNISDR and SOPAC for the first time in May 2009 in Nadi. For the first time did national focal points for disaster risk management, regional development partners and key decision makers responsible for Finance and Planning and Disaster Management come together in a single forum of exchange and sharing of experiences within the Pacific in relation to policy and operational aspects of disaster risk reduction and disaster management. The Platform also prepared for and consolidated the Pacific's position and participation at the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. Agreement was reached that the Pacific will participate in the mid-term review of the HFA by reviewing its Regional DRM Framework jointly with partners.
- ♦ **Response to Influenza Pandemic:** The UN Country Team met frequently from April-June to prepare the UN staff and offices for the H1N1 pandemic with technical assistance particularly from WHO, OCHA and UNICEF. A Pandemic Task Force updated the UN Contingency Plan and activated the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in case of a pandemic outbreak. There were fortunately no known cases



of any staff or dependents contracting the virus although there were number of confirmed cases in several Pacific Islands.

- ♦ **Human Rights:** Confidential UNCT reports for the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) process were prepared for Vanuatu in May, Fiji in February 2010 as well as the CEDAW Report for Fiji; a draft UNCT HR strategy was prepared and discussed in the UNCT to be implemented in 2010.
- ♦ **Gender Mainstreaming:** Completion of the trial run of the undg Gender Equality Accountability Scorecard with UNCT members in Fiji and Samoa in December 2008/January 2009. The narrative report was discussed at the UNCT level and will be submitted to DOCO soon.
- ♦ **Regional Cooperation:** The UN RC participated in the Cairns Pacific Island Forum Meeting along with undg Asia Pacific Chair/UNDP Regional Director in August 2009 and in the Cairns Compact Implementation Group meeting in Brisbane in October. UN hosted a side event during the Forum Economic Ministerial Meeting (FEMM) in October on 'National Sustainable Development Strategy Partnerships and Cairns Compact'.
- ♦ **Aid Effectiveness:** Under the Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific, UN Agencies are supporting PIFS on a range of issues including (i) the implementation of a peer review process to strengthen the effectiveness of national development plans and their linkages to the budget process; (ii) best practices in aid effectiveness, drawing from the Paris Declaration and now Accra Agenda for Action; and (iii) development partner reporting on how aid alignment and aid fragmentation is being addressed at country level. In addition, UN agencies have been participating in various Donor Round Tables held in several of the PICs (e.g. Nauru and Tonga) to strengthen aid effectiveness. UNDP hosts the Donor Round Tables on Climate Change every quarter in Suva where important issues related to climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as other related issues is regularly discussed. UNDP is also supporting five Pacific Island Governments of Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu to build their national capacities to manage their aid and budget systems with better data and monitoring tools.
- ♦ In response to the compounding **effects of the food, fuel and economic crisis** on the most vulnerable population in the Pacific Island countries, United Nations agencies in the Pacific worked collectively to mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable. The responses were three fold: i) Global Economic Crisis sentinel site monitoring to evaluate the social impact on the most vulnerable population in country, ii) policy advocacy using this community based monitoring results and the evidence from the world and region (e.g. Roadmap "Protecting Pacific Islands' children and women during economic and food crisis" and the Feb 2010 Pacific Conference on Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis in Vanuatu is part of this effort) and iii) institutionalization of the community based monitoring to the national data system and evolution into the Pacific Poverty Alert system that provides the policy maker the real-time social impact information. The Global Economic Crisis sentinel site monitoring therefore plays a critical role as a concerted UN and donor's response to the Pacific Islands countries together with other efforts undertaken by other agencies such as ADB (e.g. Pacific Economic Monitor, social safety net study) and World Bank.
- ♦ **Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT):** Micro Assessments of implementing partners in Kiribati, Solomon Islands & Vanuatu were completed in July and these three countries are in line to be HACT compliant in 2010. HACT Regional Workshop organised in Fiji in November where Focal Points from UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNAIDS, UN RCOs were participants as well as participants from Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji governments took part. The workshop identified a number of challenges and issues for full HACT implementation and made recommendations against them.
- ♦ **UN advocacy:** The UN continued to celebrate certain UN Days with selected communication campaigns and messages from the UN system to the general public. International Women's Day, World Health Day, World Environment Day, World Population Day, International Youth Day, World Humanitarian Day, UN Day, UN Volunteer Day, World AIDS Day, Human Rights Day, etc. were celebrated with various public functions.



- ◆ **HIV/AIDS:** The UN Cares programme was launched in Suva, Fiji on 1 December 2009 on the occasion of AIDS Day. Regional UN Cares Coordinator for Asia Pacific had visited UN offices in Fiji in May to assist the AIDS Secretariat and the UN Cares Country Team develop a work plan and also to harmonize and further strengthen in-country collaborative partnerships in support of successful UN Cares implementation. Four UN staff had participated in Training of Trainers (TOT) Regional Workshop in Bangkok in September as a part of UN Cares Team. A full day HIV Learning Retreat for UN staff and their families was held on 28 February.
- ◆ **Security Management:** The UN Security Management Team met regularly and discussed the security situations in all Pacific countries with UN staff presence. The Warden System was restructured simplifying the zoning system according to an agency based system and new Zone Wardens and deputies were appointed. The SMT unanimously decided to move Fiji's Security Phase to 'Phase 1' immediately after the political situation became more tense following abrogation of the constitution in April and continues to monitor it. A mandatory weekly radio check exercise has been in place for all international staff. Communications Tree for emergency purposes has been continually updated. Air Medevac procedures for staff posted in remote islands in case of emergencies has been updated and agreed by the SMT.
- ◆ **Common Services and Premises:** Operation Management Team (OMT) met regularly to discuss common services and premises issues. Travel services Long Term Agreements (LTAs) were finalised which will be used by all UN agencies based in Suva, should in effect give us some better value for money and better services. Several UN agencies based moved in to a new rented commercial building in April-June making it easier to work together as 'One UN'.
- ◆ **Strengthening of the UN RC Office Capacity:** The RCO Coordination Analyst took part in DOCO induction training in May and the UN Coordination Specialist participated in Asia-Pacific Coordination Officer's regional meeting in Jakarta.

3. Highlights of progress towards UNDAF outcomes:

Among other achievements, the UNDAF M&E Technical Working Group (chaired by UNFPA) contributed to annual UNDAF reviews in 4 LDCs (Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) and 3 Northern Pacific Island countries. The UNDAF Manager (based in UNFPA) provides detailed reporting on all annual reviews and collates progress towards UNDAF outcomes in an annual report. This is the third year such annual UNDAF reviews have taken place in the countries mentioned above. The Annual Review process comprises three stages:

- ☞ agency Annual Work Plan (AWP) reviews/technical consultations,
- ☞ outcome group analysis; each of thematic areas for each outcome group
- ☞ UNDAF Annual Review Meetings known as 'Joint Strategy Meeting'.

During the annual reviews, all UN agencies are invited to review their programme implementation and work planning for the following year together with the Government implementing partners. The UN agencies have been aligning their programmes and projects according to national development priorities since the beginning of UNDAF implementation which has been much appreciated by all Governments in the Pacific Islands as it reduces transaction costs of having to deal with each UN agency separately. Pacific annual review guidelines have been shared with DOCO who has labelled it as a 'good practice'. The UNDAF M&E Manager and the Chair of UNDAF M&E Technical WG also participated and contributed in DOCO's One UN Results Reporting Prototype Workshop in September 2009.

- ◆ **Joint support and Joint Programming on MDGs:** A joint programme on Millennium Development Goals was agreed between the Government of Palau and UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. A similar programme is under development for FSM. This will add value to the UN coherence at the country level. Joint UN support is being provided to the Government of Vanuatu on MDG needs assessment and costing to support the transition towards more structured planning and budgeting. As follow up to the Cairns



Compact implementation, several UN Agencies are supporting the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat to produce the 2010 MDG Tracking Report to be tabled at the next Pacific Forum Leaders meeting. Republic of Marshall Islands produced its first national MDG Report with the support of UNDP which was officially launched and disseminated in November 2009. Similarly, Fiji and Federated States of Micronesia have started their national MDG Reports to be finalised and launched in 2010.

- ◆ **Focus on national results** enables greater ownership by Governments and more focussed support by the UN agencies. For example, UN M & E experts are helping the Government of Kiribati with developing an M & E Plan for the Kiribati Development Plan with better indicators to track development results.
- ◆ UN agencies led by UNIFEM are **developing a UN Joint Programme to End Violence Against Women in Kiribati and Solomon Islands** as a follow-up to the current UNFPA project on VAW research and interventions (funded by UNFPA and AusAID and implemented by SPC and host Governments) requiring a multi-sectoral, inter-agency long-term approach and support.
- ◆ The UNAIDS Team provided the Governments of Fiji and Solomon Islands technical expertise on their submission proposals for the Global Fund Round 9 on **HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis and Malaria**. The UNAIDS Team also worked with national counterparts from Nauru, Fiji, Kiribati on strengthening their M & E systems for HIV/AIDS national programmes. UNGASS 2010 report planning workshops were held in FSM, RMI and Solomon Islands.

4. Key aspects of the proposed 2010 work plan and linkages to ongoing issues of concern within the countries covered would include:

- ◆ Implementation of outcome statements from the Pacific Conference on Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis, ILO Regional Meeting on Decent Work, Mauritius Strategy for Implementation for Small Island States +5 review and successful conclusions of and follow up to these important meetings;
- ◆ Mid-Term Review of UNDAF implementation;
- ◆ Operationalisation of One-Fund for Kiribati and possible replication in a few other Pacific Islands;
- ◆ Joint UNCT Retreat with Samoa (in February 2010) to review and plan for better UNDAF implementation and results;
- ◆ Joint Presence to be launched in Nauru and further strengthening of already established JPs for programme coherence, effectiveness and efficiency in order to allow other UN agencies to access from these JPs based on reciprocity;
- ◆ Cairns Compact Development Partners Reporting and support to aid effectiveness agenda at country and regional levels with better data collection and utilisation;
- ◆ Stronger partnership development with regional organizations for better UNDAF implementation and results;
- ◆ Focus on Joint Programmes, Programming & country funds based on demand driven country priorities;
- ◆ Review of internal machinery and UN coordination mechanisms so that further harmonization and simplification of processes can occur for better delivery of UN services in the PICs;
- ◆ Human Rights: Universal Periodic Review in Fiji, RMI, FSM and adoption and implementation of a UNCT HR strategy;
- ◆ Common Services & Premises: harmonisation of business processes for efficient and effective common services in areas such as banking, travel, ICT, etc.
- ◆ Pacific Humanitarian Team: strengthening the cluster approach further in preparations for future disaster preparedness and relief assistance with lessons learnt from previous experiences;



- ◆ Joint Communications & Advocacy: development of a common UN strategy for the Pacific;
- ◆ HIV/AIDS: Joint Programmes on evaluation and monitoring of regional response to HIV/AIDS.

5. Recommendations, if any, for changes in policies, rules and regulations

- ◆ **Investing further in Joint Presences:** The seven Joint Presences established in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) across the Pacific so far have enabled: i) Improved communication between the Governments and the UN; ii) Better tracking of development performance, especially progress towards achieving the MDGs; iii) Stronger UN presence in the SIDS; and iv) Stronger engagement with all partners on the ground. The successes achieved so far need to be built upon, with a goal of maximizing coverage across all developing states in the Pacific within the resource envelope available. The Joint Presence approach allows UN agencies to act and to invest together, creating synergetic effects out of limited resources with individual agencies. They also give the host Government the opportunity of a one-stop-shop to approach the UN system. However for the Joint Presences to fully fill this intended role, they need to grow larger and present a range of services, and they need to be in a position to represent all UN agencies. Hence, the future evolution of the Joint Presences needs to aim to: (a) establish and/or strengthen partnerships for Joint Presences with all UN agencies, beyond the current arrangements between three ExCom agencies (UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF); (b) expand the partnerships for Joint Presences into all the Small Island Developing States in the Pacific; and (c) mobilize resources to expand the range of services offered from the Joint Presences.
- ◆ **Millennium Development Goals:** The impact of the recent global food, fuel and financial crises has resulted in reduced and negative economic growth, lower Government revenues, increased debt service burdens, declines in value of offshore investments, decreased private sector activity, loss of jobs, and reduced remittances. The high reliance on imports—especially in food, fuel, and medicine and medical equipment—combined with global fluctuations in prices, are increasing vulnerability. At the same time, relatively weak institutions and capacity constraints hinder the implementation of necessary programmes to mitigate the effects of the crisis and to improve resilience. The net results of these effects add up to serious challenges in reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This was recognized and underlined at the recent Conference on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis (GEC) in Vanuatu 10-12 February 2010, and as an outcome the Conference participants recommended to the Pacific Leaders that they introduce the MDGs as a key theme in the next annual Pacific Island Forum meeting, with a view to renew their commitments to the achievement of the MDGs and to pay particular attention to the needs of poor and vulnerable communities throughout the region, through actions at the both national and regional levels. In support of these priorities, it would be important to provide UN system assistance to the Pacific Governments in preparation for the next Pacific Island Forum Leaders' meeting, and for the special UN General Assembly Summit on MDGs in September 2010. It is also essential to maintain and where possible increase the collection of data to closely monitor the effects of the global economic crisis on the vulnerable in the Pacific and progress toward the MDGs.
- ◆ **Climate Change:** Compounding the MDG challenges is the overarching impact of climate change and climate variability on living conditions, livelihoods, and infrastructure. Pacific communities will all be affected by climate change, whilst contributing very little to the causes of it. Global recognition of the unique situation of small island developing states, and commitment of adequate resources for the needs of the Pacific should be highlighted as priorities. These needs may include adaptation, mitigation, and improving social outcomes and education. In this regard, the adoption on 3rd June 2009 by the UN General Assembly of Resolution A/RES/63/281 on the possible security implications of Climate Change and the progress toward a legally binding agreement on the reduction of emissions made at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009 are important. Although many Pacific Island countries were disappointed with the outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, the need remains for a binding agreement with specific targets. It is



incumbent on the UN system to assist the Pacific Island Countries in their preparations for the next opportunity to make further progress on these issues at the next UN Climate Change Conference in Mexico City in 2010.

The UNCT looks forward to continuing to work very closely in 2010 with the Pacific Governments, regional organisations, civil society organisations, local communities, development partners, UN HQs, and concerned UN agencies in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals and real UN reforms at the country and regional levels.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Knut Ostby', is positioned above the printed name.

Knut Ostby
UN Resident Coordinator