

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 7/23: “HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE”

In response to the Third Person Note of 2 June 2008 from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to missions in Geneva, the New Zealand Government offers the following national information, including website references, to assist the OHCHR in preparing a study on the relationship between climate change and human rights.

Agencies contributing to this compilation of relevant data include the Environment Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the United Nations, Human Rights and Commonwealth Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID).

National-level assessments of the impact of climate change on vulnerable populations:

- Non-Annex I National Communications:
http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/items/2817.php
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report (AR4): <http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/ar4-syr.htm>
- IPCC AR4, Working Group II ("Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability") report: <http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/ar4-wg2.htm>
- Stern Review on the economics of climate change: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/sternreview_index.cfm

NZAID support to mitigate and adapt to climate change through international assistance and cooperation

NZAID has a concern about financing for adaptation, as these activities increasingly involve donor-tagged funding and vertical funds, which we consider inconsistent with the Paris principles on aid effectiveness. Vertical funds render countries susceptible to having to re-shape their priorities to fit the conditionalities of adaptation-specific funding windows. It is critical that adaptation, which is both highly contextual and cross-sectoral, is managed in an integrated way with nationally-focused action; that adaptation plans are nationally owned and managed; and that mechanisms for donor support are entirely complementary with this.

NZAID acknowledges the vulnerability of Pacific Island Countries to the effects of climate change, and is a strong supporter of Pacific responses to climate change. The Pacific has relatively robust strategic approaches to climate change adaptation at both regional and national levels; the challenge for donors is to align their support to these plans and priorities.

Given the high vulnerability and low emissions of Pacific Island Countries, it makes sense for NZ to support work that will help our partners adapt to the effects of climate change while providing for the livelihoods and basic needs of local people. NZAID is committed to supporting developing countries address these challenges.

NZAID's focus is increasingly to help its partners deliver on adaptation through enhanced efforts in affected sectors such as access to water and vulnerability to cyclones. On the mitigation side, such efforts in the Pacific are also driven by economic concerns, and NZAID's support includes assistance to Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), which is engaged in renewable energy work.

NZAID's assistance is focussed on responding to Pacific-identified priorities to deal with climate change, and currently includes over NZ\$10m in assistance, including:

- **Financial and policy support to the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)** to develop the Pacific Framework and Action Plan on Climate Change, and the Secretariat's climate change adaptation officer position 2005-2008, totalling approximately NZ \$600,000 since April 2005. Related core and programme support totals over \$1.2m in 2007/08.
- **Financial support to the Secretariat of the Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC)** of \$1.8m per annum which contributes to assisting Pacific Governments in adapting to climate change by integration into national planning, enhancing disaster risk management and regional cyclone forecasting, enhancing access to sustainable clean water and renewable energy supplies.
- Support to **community-level adaptation** to climate change through co-funding to the GEF Small Grants Programme in the Pacific, and the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific community risk reduction programme (NZ\$0.3m and \$0.5m per annum respectively).
- Support to the **Kiribati Adaptation Programme**, providing NZ\$1.52m to assist the Government of Kiribati to strengthen coastal defences, protect its freshwater, and storm-proof the local hospital. This is part of the NZ Government's voluntary commitment of \$5 million to assist developing

countries respond to climate change (other contributions include to the UNFCCC Least Developed Country Fund).

- Support for decreased greenhouse gas emissions and enhanced energy security through **renewable energy projects** e.g. solar electrification planning for Tokelau; \$500,000 for solar electrification in Tonga.
- **Post-cyclone rehabilitation** including most recently rebuilding in Niue after Cyclone Heta, which has seen buildings and infrastructure such as the hospital moved to higher ground in recognition of the need to plan in advance for high-intensity cyclones.
- New Zealand also includes support for the Pacific region as one of its negotiating objectives in **UNFCCC** and other climate-related international meetings.

Other relevant sources:

- Pacific Framework for Action on Climate Change http://www.sprep.org/att/publication/000438_PI_Framework_for_Action_on_Climate_Change_2006_2015_FINAL.pdf
- Nairobi Work Programme on Adaptation
- Information on the widely- publicised but inaccurate reports that New Zealand would accept the population of Tuvalu as “environmental refugees” can be found on the MFAT website <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Foreign-Relations/Pacific/NZ-Tuvalu-immigration>

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights enquired if the information provided could be made available on the OHCHR website. There would be no objection to this.