

Dec/Jan Issue # 33 Climate Change Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister

Update from COP21



Some of the Cook Islands team at COP21, Ewan Campbell, Talissa Koteka, Linda Siegele and Diane MacFadzien (Photo by Ana Tiraa)

It is hard to get a legally binding agreement that is perfect to all Parties a total of 196 Parties. Most of the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) asks were anchored into the agreement such as:

1. Embedding of the 1.5 degree target in the purpose of the agreement;
2. Recognition of the special circumstances of SIDS;
3. Recognition of the need to scale up climate finance;
4. 5-year cycles for the review of emissions reduction commitments
5. Legally binding agreement
6. Separate and distinct recognition of loss and damage

These are fundamental aspects which we believe will redress and alleviate the burden on SIDS in coping with the adverse impacts of climate change.

Manihiki Hydroponics

The existing hydroponics in Tauhunu village came under scrutiny when the land owner asked for their land to be returned. As a result a new site was identified to relocate the Tauhunu hydroponics. Clearing of the land on the new site has commenced pictured below.



New site for the Tauhunu hydroponics (Photo by John McLeod)

Some materials have arrived on the island (pictured below) with the rest to follow on the next scheduled boat to Manihiki.



Hydroponics materials in Manihiki (Photo by John McLeod)

Harvest in Manihiki



Unga harvest in Manihiki (Photo by John McLeod)

Residents of Manihiki island harvested a substantial number of unga (coconut crab)

Kura Tau'i'anga Reva

in December after the rau'i was lifted. According to the SRIC CC Focal Point, Mr John McLeod, nearly two hundred unga were harvested and shared out to the people. After the harvest, the rau'i was again imposed on the unga. John reiterated that the people of Manihiki were ecstatic with the harvest since it was the first time that the unga harvest involved the whole island and everyone received a share of the harvest.



People harvesting the milk fish (Photo by John McLeod)

Rau'i for the milk fish was also lifted at the same time to which the people harvested close to three hundred milk fish which was also shared to everyone on the island.

Aluminium boat to Tamarua Fishing Club

Tamarua Fishing Club in Mangaia will soon receive a new boat that will assist the local fishermen in the village with fishing. Hopefully, with this new boat the fishermen will be able to bring in more fish



Photo provided by Mia Teaurima

for their families with the excess to be sold to generate income. Considering that employment in the

Pa Enea is restricted to government jobs, this extra activity will help those families earn some income.

Tongareva Te Pitaka Project

Tuesday 19th witnessed the signing of the contract between SRIC CC and Timberland Ltd., who was awarded the supplier to provide materials for the Te Pitaka Project. The initial project was an outcome of the Northern students workshop from last year, where the students from Tongareva proposed for tree planting on Motu Mangarongaro and an observatory hut for turtle monitoring. The materials will shortly be shipped on the first boat to Tongareva.



Ana Tiraa with Alex Olah of Timberland and Thomas Taime after signing the supply contract 19 Jan (Photo by Celine Dyer)

Nassau Uwi Kuru Project

Supplier for the Uwi Kuru Project was awarded to CITC Building Centre. The project proposed by the Nassau students was to erect fencing around the planting area to keep animals from damaging crops, particularly taro which is the main root crop and the staple diet for the people. The SRIC team has been working since last year to source and secure the required materials for this project. Finally, this has been accomplished and the materials are ready to be shipped on the next available boat to Nassau Island. The students of Nassau will be involved with the implementation of the project, and will monitor and report on the progress to the SRIC team. Materials for this project will be shipped on the next

boat bound for Nassau.



Thomas Taime with John Teio of CITC Building Centre and Teina Rongo, 19 Jan (Photo by Celine Dyer)

SRIC CC meet with Ridge to Reef (R2R)



Climate Change team meet with Ridge to Reef team 26 Jan (Photo by Celine Dyer)

Floods damage taro crops in Pukapuka



Women saving the taro from the flooded areas in Pukapuka (Photo provided by Brian Opo)

The SRIC CC team commenced the procurement to secure materials for the Pukapuka drainage and fencing along with the Palmerston tie down project in December. However, due to the festive season and with the insufficient supply of materials available for shipment and with limited shipping services, the delivery of these materials were delayed including project materials for the islands of Nassau and Tongareva. Unfortunately, the island of Pukapuka was hit by flooding before the project materials could reach them. The projects for Pukapuka, Nassau and Tongareva were a result of proposals developed at the Northern students workshop last July. Palmerston island made an urgent appeal for the tie down project in preparation for the cyclone season. Some of the materials for the Palmerston tie down project were urgently air freighted from New Zealand to meet the shipping schedule to Palmerston and before another cyclone occurs.

The two UNDP programmes met on Tuesday 26 at the Climate Change office. Since the R2R team are all new on their respective roles, the meeting enabled both teams to share, learn, question and discuss areas of synergies and collaboration on future projects. The meeting also presented opportunity to get to know the team members of the respective programmes. Both programmes strategised to strike up partnerships in areas of synergies and collaboration where possible.

Atiu moving ahead with coconut oil project



Foundation site for the Atiu coconut oil project (Photo provided by Techelle Punua)

The cold press coconut oil project in Atiu finally kicked off with the laying down of the building foundation on Thursday 21 January. The Atiu Island Administration took charge of the construction with the assistance of local builder Teremoana Wendy. They hope to complete the building at the end of April. The SRIC programme have also ear marked the

same project for the islands of Mauke and Manihiki which will soon follow.

Northern water project tender



Opening of the tender box for the Northern water project 28 Jan (Photo by Celine Dyer)

The Northern water project is a partnership between the SRIC programme and the EU GIZ to increase water capacity storage in the Northern group islands. Under this project the existing community water tanks will either be repaired or if need be new ones constructed to increase water storage on these islands. The scoping exercise was carried out last year where it was noted that many of the old water tanks are in disrepair state with some crumbling to the ground. This partnership hopes to alleviate water shortage situation by providing more water storage capacity on these islands to mitigate future drought conditions.

Platform Meeting 17 December

The last platform meeting for 2015 was held on Thursday 17 December at the Vainetini Headquarters in Tauae. Arona the Director of the Meteorological Office reported that the climate early warning system project will be implemented in 2016. Emergency Management Cook Islands is undergoing the review of the Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) whilst also collecting household data to populate the GeoPortal. Ideally this will alleviate and speed up the recovery process whilst also valuable for future planning. The National Communications coordinator position underwent the recruitment process, however, the candidate nominated for the position accepted another job offer. So far no one has been appointed on the position but a headhunt will be

conducted to secure a suitable person for the position.



Participants at the Platform meeting 17 Dec (Photo by Celine Dyer)

Public Health reported that they are in the process of purchasing a 50inch tv screen to be installed at the Rarotonga International Airport arrival area. Health awareness information and videos will be screened to highlight international mosquito borne diseases mainly, denge, zika, and chikungunya as well as influenza, diarrhoea, ebola and MERS. Local climate change information featuring impacts and mitigation efforts will also be screened. The public health project is part of their strategy funded by the SRIC CC programme. The Mangaia island agriculture project funded by SRIC CC is in the planting stage. Four plots of land ranging from one to three acres were secured with the landowners who agreed to plant the land themselves with assistance from the SRIC CC programme.



Mia Teaurima SRIC Focal Point for Mangaia presenting the report from Mangaia (Photo by Celine Dyer)

The Tongareva Te Pitaka project is awaiting for the rest of the materials to be landed. So far, only the

Kura Tau'i'anga Reva

land clearing equipment have arrived. However, the rest of the material to built the turtle observatory hut and the nursery for the tree planting project have been procured and awaiting shipment. According to the Tongareva Focal Point Thomas Taime, it's just a matter of time for these projects to be completed.



Vaine Wichman reports on the USP EU GCCA project (Photo by Celine Dyer)

The USP EU GCCA project in Tongareva is under the second phase of the programme supported by the Pacific Centre for Sustainable Development at USP and the European Union. It is in the process of shipping additional water tanks for Omoka village to increase water storage capacity along with coastal protection materials for the village of Te Tautua. The initiative was spear headed from the vulnerability assessment conducted in 2013 by Vaine Wichman with support from the island council and the Cook Islands National Council of Women. The report prioritised three pertinent areas of concern for Tongareva; water security, coastal protection and energy efficiency. To date, priority three has been achieved with solar energy installed for all islands in the Northern group under the national renewable energy charter.

The USP EU GCCA project has provided ongoing support and awareness on responsible water harvesting and management to communities for sustainable future water security. Coastal protection is ongoing and very challenging due to the increased frequency and stronger velocity of wave actions on the island of Tongareva.

Looking ahead to 2016, the local team of Vaine Wichman and Taputu Mariri will work with Aliti Koroi the USP/EU Regional Coordinator to document the

benefits of the project on the island over the last three years.

The Cook Islands Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) submitted under the UNFCCC focused on the transformation of all the islands to renewable energy. It also highlighted the fact that the Cook Islands is on a pathway of green house gas reduction reflected in its existing frameworks and actions. Although, our contribution to total global ghg emission is negligible, however, our on ground actions proves far greater commitments beyond our means.

Professor John Hay reiterated the Cook Islands move for future energy security is to address the transport sector which is the second highest ghg emitter after electricity. The Professor drives an electric car, one of three on the island, but there is ongoing improvement in technology such as solar powered and hybrid cars. With global push for energy efficient cars, fossil fuelled commodities will be a thing of the past.

Marae Moana, the Cook Islands marine park is nearly at the end of finalising its policy according to project manager Jacqui Evans. Comprehensive consultations were carried out over the past two years to gather the people's views on the designated marine park. At this stage people can still express their views on the policy document which will eventually be finalised sometime in February 2016.



Kura - Kuriri

Teariki Rongo was appointed the new SRIC CC Focal Point for Mauke

Ana Tiraa, Celine Dyer and Richard Pokoina will be off to the North on the SRIC CC project.

William Tuivaga will attend a CTCN meeting in Tonga.

Till next time.....KIA MANUI