

## November Issue # 22 Climate Change Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister



*Ms Amelia Fukofuka, Ms Lavinia Tama and Ms Ana Tiraa, Cook Islands delegation to COP20, Lima.*

### ***Cook Islands to join global climate change talks in Peru***

The Cook Islands will be joining over 15,000 delegates at the 20th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Lima, Peru from 1 to 12 December this year.

The annual gathering that brings together all Parties to negotiate a global agreement on climate change is of strong significance for the Pacific islands who collectively contribute to less than 0.03% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions however are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts. The Cook Islands is amongst these.

"We have several key agenda items that we will be following," said Ms. Ana Tiraa, Head of the Climate Change Division and the Cook Islands delegation attending the UNFCCC COP 20.

"This coming conference is very complex with many different agenda threads all being negotiated at the same time, but for us we have very specific issues to follow, issues which impact our nation directly."

Loss and Damage, Climate Change Financing, Adaptation and the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action will be followed by the Cook Islands delegation.

The members consist of Ms. Ana Tiraa, Office of the Prime Minister, Ms. Amelia Fukofuka, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration and Ms. Lavinia Tama, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management residing on Rarotonga. They will be joined by Cook Islanders residing in Samoa working for the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) - Ms. Diane McFadzien, Mr. Ewan Cameron and Ms. Nanette Woonton. Also to make up the delegation is Ms. Linda Siegele who has provided technical assistance to the delegation for many years.

"These agenda issues we will be negotiating on behalf of the Cook Islands may just seem like technical terminology however they have real implications on our people. Loss and Damage for example looks at impacts from extreme weather events and slow onset events such as sea level rise and ocean acidification," said Tiraa.

"These are impacts we feel but we are not the cause of them, so we are negotiating how best we can be accommodated for our loss caused now and losses that are to come as well as how to stop it from happening."

Another important agenda item followed by the Cook Islands is the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action also known as the ADP. This is a new body under the climate change Convention to develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force applicable to all Parties that will help slow climate change. This new agreement will be considered for adoption by Parties at the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties to be held in Paris 2015. The upcoming negotiations in Lima are important as it sets the foundation for Paris.

"Having the Cook Islands in the room when these issues are being negotiated is important for our survival, we must persevere and be hopeful. While the results aren't immediate you must remember that climate change isn't immediate also - the impacts we are feeling now are from greenhouse gas emissions from over a hundred years ago. We must persevere to negotiate favourable outcomes for us all."

The 20th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is hosted in Lima, Peru from 1 - 12 December. For more

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information please visit [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int). – Nanette Woonton.

### *Pa Eua Delegation to Samoa*



*Ms Rufina, Ms Josephine, Ms Teina Lucky of Mauke off to Samoa to learn about coconut virgin oil processing (Photo by Celine Dyer) 26/11/2014*

Three women from Mauke are amongst a team of eight attending a cold press virgin coconut oil workshop in Samoa. The workshop is organised and paid by the SRIC CC programme under Climate Change with funding by UNDP from the Adaptation Fund.

For the last few decades women on Mauke earned their income by harvesting the leaves of the 'maire' plant to make eis for the lucrative Hawaiian market. The 'maire' plant grows in the wild amongst razor sharp corraline rocks (makatea) which is difficult to access. However, in the last few years the Mauke supply of maire has substantially declined and unable to keep up with the market demand. Investigation discovered that the climatic conditions have changed dramatically thus affecting the growth of the plant. According to local knowledge, extreme heat and longer drought periods over the last few years has stunted the growth of the plant thus reducing the rate of producing leaves.

From the island of Manihiki, two men will be attending this workshop to represent the women's group on the island. Like the women of Mauke, women on Manihiki has also for decades earned their own incoming through their own resourcefulness by utilising natural resources on their island. Women of Manihiki are renowned for their fine 'rito' hats made from certain part of the coconut leaves. However,

climatic conditions of extreme heat with long drought periods has affected the quality of coconut leaves meaning the women have to perform another process on top of an already lengthy process of preparing the leaves for weaving. Consequently, they are unable to maintain their normal production particularly for those older and fragile women as this creates more intensive labour work for them. Women of Manihiki also make shell necklaces and headbands from shells collected on the corals. In recent years, this has been a challenge because of shorter low tide durations and frequent rough sea conditions that are limiting their access to these resources.



*Atiu delegation meeting with SRIC CC Manager, William Tuivaga*

Women of Atiu are renowned for making intricate beautiful flower decorations, head eis and wall displays from the root of the 'mati' tree. However, due to changes in climatic conditions of extreme heat and longer drought periods this has affected the growth of the 'mati' tree besides overgrowth from introduced species thus reducing productivity and economic benefits to the women.

The training workshop in Samoa will be conducted by Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI) who has been in the cold press virgin coconut oil business for eighteen years. Through their business training and accreditation program, it has enabled farmers in Samoa to gain organic certification to international standards certifying them as suppliers of virgin coconut oil to the renowned "The Body Shop International". The Women in Business also work with similar organisations around the Region sharing their experiences and hope to develop a network market of similar products as a support mechanism for women in the region interested in pursuing such business ventures.

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Whilst in Samoa the team of eight will undergo training in business management and how to set up the business, construction of a processing site, operations on the site, procedures as well as commercially marketing their products. They will also be expected to check the type of materials used in the construction of the processing site with measurements so they are able to determine the ideal replica for their specific situation on each of their islands. The islands of Mauke, Manihiki and Atiu under the SRIC CC Programme identified coconut oil as a viable opportunity to build on, expand and leverage on existing skills and knowledge of women on these islands. From this training, the women will be able to commercialize their products and with accreditation will be able to join in the list of suppliers of virgin coconut oil to the global market. The team will be in Samoa for ten days.

### ***Brief Summary of the Activities carried out under the Climate Change and Health Plan 2013/2015***

#### **Activities Completed**

Procurement and distribution of pesticides, personal protection equipment (PPE's), stationeries and uniform for Te Pa Enea Health Protection Officers (HPO) and Health workers on Aitutaki, Mangaia, Atiu, Mauke, Manihiki, Pukapuka, Nassau, Penrhyn, Rakahanga, Palместon and Mitiaro



**Minister of Health, Hon Nadi Glassie receiving supplies from SRICC Officer Robert Matapo, July, 2013**

Two weeks training workshop completed under SICC program in November, 2013 for all HPO's on Rarotonga

Complete mental health consultation training on most of Te Pa Enea.

The Zika outbreak in February, 2014 on Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Mauke and Manihiki was contained within two months where a combination of mosquito control programme including public awareness, mosquito larval surveillance, risk assessment per focal spraying of immediate reported cases were conducted.



**Perifocal spraying to control infected adult mosquitoes**

#### **Acknowledgement**

On behalf of the Secretary of Health, all Directors and staff of Te Marae Ora we would like to express and extend our appreciation and thank you maata to the coordinators of climate change organisation for making these activities possible with the equipments, protective gears, chemicals used in this area that enable us to combat such situation that we come through and looking forward to your future support on any health related matters that may arise in the future – Charlie Ave, **Climate Change and Health Plan Coordinator**

#### **Kura Kuriri**

This month we say goodbye to Rob Matapo and son Rogan as they move to NZ. Rob has been with our SRIC CC project for just over two years in which Rob's time was spent in setting up our Focal Points in the Pa Enea, training them and also moving the SRIC CC projects in the Pa Enea. We will miss Rob and Rogan, but we also wish them well in their future plans. Aere ra, Kia Manuia e Rob.

Climate change calendars are out, if you want one come into our office and grab one.

Till next time, Kia Manuia!