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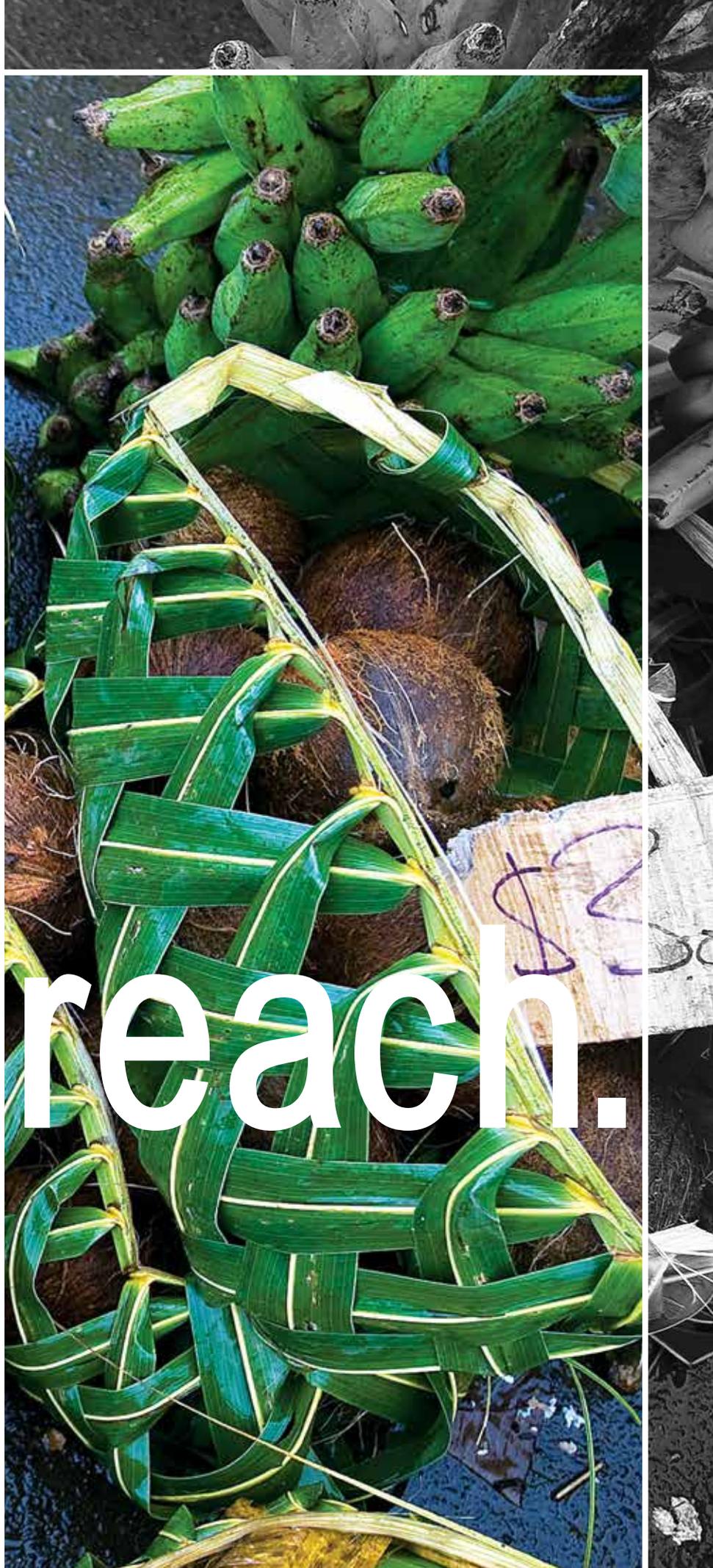
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pic: Asian Development Bank

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Stakeholder Forum is an international organisation working to advance sustainable development and promote democracy at a global level. Our work aims to enhance open, accountable and participatory international decision-making on sustainable development through enhancing the involvement of stakeholders in intergovernmental processes. For more information, visit: www.stakeholderforum.org

Outreach is a multi-stakeholder publication on climate change and sustainable development. It is the longest continually produced stakeholder magazine in the sustainable development arena, published at various international meetings on the environment; including the UNCSO meetings (since 1997), UNEP Governing Council, UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) and World Water Week. Published as a daily edition, in both print and web form, Outreach provides a vehicle for critical analysis on key thematic topics in the sustainability arena, as well as a voice of regional and local governments, women, indigenous peoples, trade unions, industry, youth and NGOs. To fully ensure a multi-stakeholder perspective, we aim to engage a wide range of stakeholders for article contributions and project funding.

If you are interested in contributing to Outreach, please contact the team (acutter@stakeholderforum.org or ifenn@stakeholderforum.org)

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Industry associations are strategic actors in transitioning Caribbean SIDS to sustainable economies

Dr. Kalim U. Shah

Indiana University Northwest in the United States and the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago



pic: Castara in Tobago, by Nicolas Will www.nicolaswill.com

The ability of small island economies to transition from current development pathways to a low carbon, green, sustainable one depends largely on structural changes within the various economically important industry sectors such as tourism, agriculture, manufacturing and financial services. This requires significant policy initiatives by SIDS governments and ‘buy in’ from the business community, usually represented by business and industry associations (IAs) which have gradually been involved in national sustainable development policy processes.

Having worked on sustainability issues with a variety of IAs (chambers of commerce, manufacturers associations, banking, tourism and service sector associations) across the Caribbean and even in North America and Europe with Caribbean interests, I view them as conduits between national governments and their business memberships, and I can make two evidence based statements. First, not all IAs in the Caribbean have the capabilities or strategic mandate from members to pursue a sustainability agenda. Second, not all governments, government agencies or policy leaders involved in sustainable development policy making understand how – nor have the desire – to engage IAs as the voice of the business sector. Here I illustrate why government must, and how IAs can, take immediate actions to address these statements for the sake of sustainable development in Caribbean SIDS.

A decade ago, the Jamaican hotel and tourism association (JHTA) engaged with the Ministry of Tourism and UNDP to pilot sustainability practices in locally owned hotels, leading to voluntary JHTA (in conjunction with the Caribbean Hotel Association) green hotel certification and measurable reductions in energy and water uses (hotel managers read ‘massive savings on bills’). Jamaica and now others following similar IA engagement like Barbados have the most green certified hotels and the largest annual volume increases in eco-tourists in the Caribbean. This illustrates some vital points. First, government wins because the IA has removed significant regulatory, administrative and enforcement burdens through leading the sustainable hotels and certification thrust. Second, the JHTA may not have had a member mandate to pursue this if it were not for the business cases and real business benefits first put to them by UNDP. Third, even with a mandate, the JHTA may not have had the technical capabilities to assist its members if not for government cooperation and collaboration with regional associations like the CHA. The public-private partnership model has

a proven track record and needs to be cultured in the Caribbean, with IAs front and centre.

In a recent landmark study, I found that businesses operating in Trinidad and Tobago that were American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) members exhibited more sustainability practices than those with membership in other local IAs and those without any IA involvement of any kind. I found three operational reasons for this.

First, the AMCHAM was heavily involved in US-Caribbean business matches and exchanges that allowed local business personnel to experience advanced US business practices, with only US businesses with strong sustainability records involved, allowing local business personnel and leaders to absorb and take home advanced sustainability technologies, practices, values and policies. Second, the AMCHAM regularly invited internationally recognised sustainability leaders including technical leaders, engineers and scientists from US businesses like General Electric and Sun Microsystems to talk to members about corporate sustainability. Third, the AMCHAM exposed local members to sustainability learning through innovative ‘service bundling’. For example, its corporate procurement seminar topics include green procurement, and its regulatory compliance training event discusses tax compliance alongside environmental compliance.

Local IAs can well learn from this example and replicate it for their own business communities. Governments should also recognise the benefits of working more intensively and strategically with the right types of IAs that can most quickly and effectively diffuse sustainable development values to members and catalyse change in business operations. This helps share the weight of the national sustainable development promotion, easing the stress of SIDS governments with limited resources, and building private sector ‘buy in’ to the sustainable development process ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Green destination status and sustainable tourism for Small Island Developing States

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Green Destinations and Coastal and Marine Union (EUCC)

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face economic and touristic challenges, and require special treatment due to their unique characteristics of small size, isolated locations, vulnerability to sea-level rise, and exposure to natural disasters. These islands also host some of the largest marine protected areas, and are repositories of ocean biodiversity and ecosystems that are essential for sustainable tourism.

With sustainable tourism as an important current and future driver for economic growth, SIDS can progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and associated post 2015 policies. To do so, SIDS can use objective assessment tools and strategies to make their destination attractive and competitive including: sustainable tourism certifications and recognition; best practice examples; a shared focus on energy, water and climate adaptation and mitigation; capacity building and technology transfer; and attracting external sustainable investment.

Article 19 of the SIDS Conference Zero Draft discusses developing policies that foster responsive, resilient and inclusive tourism, and support the promotion and development of sustainable eco- and cultural tourism. It also refers to using the expertise of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) to provide direct and focused support.

A Green Destination is a tourism destination (city, town, island, national park or resort) that is exceptional, viewed as sustainable by visitors, and with a sustainable tourism policy that meets the GSTC Criteria for Destinations (GSTC C-D). Green Destinations are also those that receive an award from a GSTC C-D compliant programme such as QualityCoast.

The Small Islands – Green Destinations partnership, registered with the SIDS Conference, offers an assessment tool and data base that can contribute to sustainable economies of SIDS, and make them more attractive and competitive tourist destinations. By identifying strengths and challenges, SIDS can develop and implement individually suitable sustainable destination strategies. Through recognition as Green Destinations, SIDS become more visible and marketable. Their tourism strategy can reflect their unique sustainable characteristics,

particularly their terrestrial and marine biodiversity and ecosystems. The sustainable energy, water and carbon approaches characterising a sustainable tourism sector can also increase the sustainability of entire islands and all communities.

For the tourism industry and the independent traveller, an objective and independent process is important to assess how islands meet sustainability criteria that are not linked to eco-labels and award processes. For example, the database BasiQ database 3.2 which underlies the Global Sustainable Tourism Review (GSTR) contains information based on more than 30 weighted sustainability performance indicators, applied so far to over 1000 coastal and island destinations. In addition to government data, and information from visitor reviews and expert assessment, nearly half the data comes from Google Earth, Google Maps and statistical data bases, allowing for the ongoing inclusion of geo-spatial data and continuous improvement of knowledge.

To prosper in coming years, SIDS need to target the high value growing sustainable tourism market, whilst contributing to the increasing marketing visibility of SIDS in this global tourism sector. Their unique sustainable tourism strategies should include the continuous improvement of local tourism knowledge and capacity, the development of appropriate policies, improving local businesses and attracting external sustainable investment. This could include focusing on targeted external investments in energy and water services and infrastructure through innovation advice and support provided by centres such as the Centre for Energy Technologies.

In summary, the GSTR makes the GSTC C-D operational for SIDS by encouraging islands to focus on various tourism sustainability and attractiveness aspects, and translating the difficult concept of “destination sustainability” into concrete information relevant to islands and travellers. By taking measures to improve under rating processes such as GSTR, SIDS improve their island image and brand.

To succeed as sustainable tourism destinations, SIDS need to monitor and communicate progress from research to marketing to destination verification and auditing. SIDS can also improve their status as sustainable tourism destinations through a shared focus on vital sectors such as energy, water, and climate adaptation and mitigation, and knowledge and technology transfer. Given the focus and breadth of partnerships on offer at the Conference, a SIDS focus on sustainable destination tourism would support not only tourism but complimentary economic development ■

A meeting of minds

When UN Women started a partnership with the Nationwide Microbank in 2013, the vendors at Gerehu Market in the National Capital District, Papua New Guinea, were paying more than 10 times more in fees than they were supposed to, even though between 60% and 99% of that revenue was not making its way to the government. In addition, women, who make up the majority of vendors, were subject to high levels of harassment and violence as when they left their stalls at the end of the day as they were taking their earnings in cash home with them.

The partnership aimed not only at providing them with an affordable, reliable and secure method of depositing their cash, but also financial literacy training to help them manage their money and increase their savings – empowering them both physically and economically.

As the manager of the women's banking unit at the Nationwide Microbank, Gima Kepi gets to interact with a lot of these women, experiencing a thrill each time she sees one of them taking charge of their earnings and taking another step closer to financial independence.

Tell us a little bit about the partnership between UN Women and the Nationwide Microbank.

We started with a pilot project at Gerehu Market that allowed market vendors to use our e-wallet system to pay their market fees rather than handing over cash. Then we provided financial literacy training so that they knew not only how to use the system but also learned basic budgeting skills, how to calculate loans and gained an understanding of interest and fees. The vendors can use the system because UN Women formally registers them through the market vendors association, so they don't need to worry about the usual identification processes.

It involves a lot of handholding, but it works. Since we started, three of the women we work with have created deposits of 3,000 kina (US\$1200) each; these women had never had bank accounts before. Between June 2013 and August 2014 more than 34,000 kina (US\$13,800) has been saved by 467 market vendors, 81 per cent of whom are women. This goal-based saving means that when shocks occur they have back-up funds to get them through.

What were the challenges?

We have high illiteracy rates here in Papua New Guinea and this system requires using modern technology, so the challenges of getting market vendors to use it can



pic: Gima Kepi, Nationwide Microbank

be enormous. This is where the financial literacy training comes in. We also face cultural challenges because the system removes the opportunity for the fee collectors [the majority of whom are men] to pocket the money, so once they heard about the initiative, they tried to talk the vendors out of taking part. It forced us to look for new ways of doing things.

What are the wider effects of the initiative?

Culturally people have been used to handouts – whether it's from the government or other organisations – so we are helping them to move away from that and become more financially independent. It helps to reduce poverty, improve the standard of living and empowers ordinary people.

What advice would you give to organisations considering partnering with private companies?

Partnerships are the way forward. Everyone needs to be actively committed and needs to play their part – the private sector, the development partner and local government. You need to find partners that can align themselves with and support your goals. And you need to keep talking; our key stakeholders meet every fortnight to identify challenges and opportunities. ■

Gima is part of the UN Women delegation taking part in the Third International Conference on SIDS and will be speaking about the Safe Cities and Markets for Change projects at the partnership dialogue about Social Development in SIDS, health and NCDs, Youth and Women on Tuesday 2nd September.

From weeds to electricity, UN partnership aims to connect families to electric grid

UN News Centre

A toxic weed in Samoa is being turned into electricity, raising hopes that families on the southern coast of the Pacific island can be connected to the national grid as a result of a partnership between the Government and the United Nations.

"This is the first time ever in Samoa that you produce electricity from biogas," said Mina Weydahl, Energy Analyst and acting head of the energy unit at the UN Development Programme (UNDP) office in the country. "It's not a new technology. They do it in Europe, and they do it in China. But it's new in Samoa."

To showcase the bio-fuel partnership, delegates at the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) conference set to begin on Monday in the Samoan capital, Apia, will be riding around in 15 six-seater electric carts partially fuelled by organic waste. The project is run by UNDP, along with Samoa's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

"The system we have here is not big enough to power all those golf carts completely but we are going to give them a little top up," Ms. Weydahl told the UN News Centre standing next to a cart that was being charged from a biogas digester.

Reminiscent of a large white propane tank, the biogas digester breaks down organic waste through a fermentation process that does not use air. The methane is then fed into a generator to produce electricity.

In the southern coast village of Piu, plans are underway to use this same technology to build a much larger biogas digester that can provide power for six families. Additional energy can be sold back to the national grid, generating income for the community.

The project is part of the regional Pacific Island Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Programme (PIGGAREP). Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the project is now supporting Piu to build and manage a power station fuelled entirely by local organic waste. The Danish Government, added another \$3 million to be used by Samoa and eight other countries in the region.

"This project is quite interesting because we are going to use a vine, it's called the Merremia vine. That is an invasive vine to Samoa and, if you go out to the outer areas of Samoa, you'll see it covers everything," Ms. Weydahl noted, describing a type of 'Morning Glory'. The vine is blamed



pic: Feeding the biogas digester, UNDP, by Abril Esquivel

for killing more than 60 per cent of Samoa's forests. But as biomass, it could be fuel for bioenergy.

"The goal is to demonstrate the viability of biogas solutions on the island, while at the same time stopping the spread of the invasive vine," UNDP has said.

Samoa, like many other Pacific island states, is very heavily dependent on generators that run on either diesel or petrol, and which have to be shipped to the island. The country imports up to 100 million litres of petrol per year, of which nearly half are used for transport, according to official figures. 70 per cent of the power consumption in Samoa comes from fossil fuel, according to the UN agency. Most of the remaining 30 per cent is hydro power.

"Samoa is lucky because they have a little bit of mountains," said Ms. Weydahl, "but many of the island states are flat. They're atoll, so they don't have any hydro because you need a little height difference to do hydro."

Biogas, then, offers potential for development in SIDS, particularly at the community level. Whereas wind or hydropower systems can be large, generating thousands of megawatts, bio-fuel systems such as the one being demonstrated at the UN conference is "something that a smaller village or a smaller household in the community can invest in," the energy expert noted. She added that the price of one kilowatt hour in Samoa is roughly an "extremely expensive" 45 cents, as compared with the rest of the world.

As the UN conference on SIDS officially kicks on Monday, the carts run on bio-fuel are meant to be reminders of successful partnerships and how to expand them.

"This can produce electricity," Ms. Weydahl said. "That's what we're demonstrating here, to get people talking." ■

Parallel and side events calendar

DATE	TIME	VENUE	TITLE	ORGANISERS
SUNDAY 31st AUGUST	12:00 - 16:00	Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Conference Centre	Private Sector Forum (Day 2)	UN-OHRLLS, the Government of Samoa and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce
MONDAY 1st SEPTEMBER	11:00 - 12:30	CR 3	Blue Growth/Blue Economy Initiative: Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture in SIDS	Food & Agriculture Organization, Government of The Netherlands and Government of Indonesia
	11:00 - 12:30	CR 2	Building Resilience in Small Island Developing States through Foresight	Government of Tonga
	11:00 - 12:30	CM 5	Enhancing Competitiveness in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	World Bank Group
	11:00 - 12:30	CM 4	Inclusive value chains for livelihoods, trade and food security; case of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture industry in Small Island States	UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
	13:00 - 14:30	CM 4	Building Pacific Resilience – The Integrated Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP)	Government of Tonga
	13:00 - 14:30	Partnerships Hall	Health and Noncommunicable Diseases based on Healthy Island Vision	Ministry of Health, Samoa
	13:00 - 14:30	CR 3	Our Sea of Islands, Our Livelihoods, Our Oceania -The Pacific Ocean Alliance	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
	13:00 - 14:30	CR 2	Small Islands: high stakes and increased opportunities for promoting sustainable consumption and production (SCP)	The Republic of Mauritius (Co-host: UNEP)
	13:00 - 14:30	CM 5	Sustainable Anti-Corruption Reform	UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
	15:00 - 16:30	CR 3	Choseul Integrated Climate Change Programme (CHICCHAP)	Dr Melchior Mataki, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology
	15:00 - 16:30	CM 4	Forum on Advancing Statistical Development in SIDS in the Post-2015 Era	PARIS21-OECD in collaboration with Samoa Bureau of Statistics, SPC
	15:00 - 16:30	CR 2	Prevent, Prepare, and Respond: Displacement in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change	Government of the Kingdom of Norway
	15:00 - 16:30	CM 5	Promoting Closer Economic Integration for Full Employment and Decent Work in the Caribbean	Trinidad and Tobago; International Labour Organization
	15:00 - 17:00	CR 1	CEB high-level event	CEB Secretariat
	17:00 - 18:30	CR 3	Ceremony for the Opening of the SIDS Dock Statute for Signature	Caribbean Community [CARICOM] Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) & Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
	17:00 - 18:30	CR 1	Coping with and adapting to ocean threats for resilient SIDS communities	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
	17:00 - 18:30	CM 5	Inclusive and Sustainable solutions for youth employment in SIDS	UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
	17:00 - 18:30	CR 2	Linking SIDS and SE4All: From Barbados to Samoa, and Beyond	UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and CEO, Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All)
	17:00 - 18:30	CM 4	Population dynamics for the sustainable development of small island developing states	UN Population Fund (UNFPA)
	19:00 - 20:30	CM 5	Building resilience and partnerships: protecting communities and their animals from disasters	World Society for the Protection of Animals
	19:00 - 20:30	CM 4	Ending Illegal Fishing: How the Right Technology and a Collaborative Approach to Combatting IUU Fishing Makes a Difference on the Water	The Pew Charitable Trust
	19:00 - 20:30	CR 2	Pacific Europe Network for Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) – PACE-Net Plus	PACE-Net Plus Consortium
	19:00 - 20:30	CR 3	WIN: Promoting Local knowledge in the SIDS	WIN World Network of Indigenous and Local Community Land and Sea Managers

Reflections from the Renewable Energy Forum

Amber Carvan

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Opportunity, innovation and urgency were key themes of the discussions at today's Renewable Energy Forum, an official SIDS pre-conference event presented by the Governments of Samoa, New Zealand and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

I had the pleasure of attending this Forum through my role in the communications team at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). We were blessed to have an array of knowledgeable, articulate and passionate speakers at the event – my fingers were certainly kept busy trying to jot down their words as faithfully as possible. Rather than provide a summary of discussions, I'd like to share some of my favourite messages from the day-long event. Apologies in advance if these statements are not a word perfect reflection of what was spoken at the event today.



pic: Mr Kosi Latul, SPREP's Deputy Director General, by A.Carvan/SPREP

The first of my favourite messages came from Samoa's Prime Minister, HE Mr Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, who stressed the importance of renewable energy initiatives to safeguarding the future of Small Island Developing States.

Renewable energy holds the key to stabilising the climate system. This is not just a matter of development and prosperity but also our survival.

Mr Adnan Amin, the Director-General of IRENA, did a great job of moderating the high level discussion on renewable energy and spoke eloquently about the important legacy that Pacific islanders have created as a result of mastering the tides and currents to explore the vast oceans that characterise our region.



pic: Children from St Mary's School, by A.Carvan/SPREP

The climate change challenge and adoption of renewable energy technologies gives Pacific islanders the opportunity to apply this same ingenuity to other aspects of the natural environment.

This navigation metaphor was further developed throughout the day and was picked up by a number of other speakers, including Ambassador Angus Friday from Grenada in the session about mainstreaming renewables in SIDS.

We have an opportunity here to navigate around the thorny issue of Small Island Developing States and renewable energy but it requires that we all row together.

The same speaker went on to deliver one of my favourite messages of the day. Ambassador Friday talked passionately about the critical importance of 're-framing' some of the challenges faced by SIDS in financing and implementing renewable energy projects.

We [the SIDS] don't just have to come to the table cap in hand. We have a magnificent offer to make to the rest of the world whereby we can serve as a petri dish for how to deal with these [climate related] issues. Truly, this is a magnificent offer.

Like many others, I'm very much looking forward to observing how the discussions on renewable energy develop and evolve through the course of next week's conference ■

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