Climate Change and Asymmetrical Security Issues for Pacific Island Nations

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SASAKAWA
PEACE
FOUNDATION

Structure of the Presentation

- **1) The problem**
- **2) Introducing the Pacific Islands Region**
- **3) Climate security in the Pacific Islands Region**
- **4) Climate security discourse in the Pacific Islands Region**
- **5) Climate Security and Pacific Island ecopoetics/ecopolitics**
- **6) Conclusions**
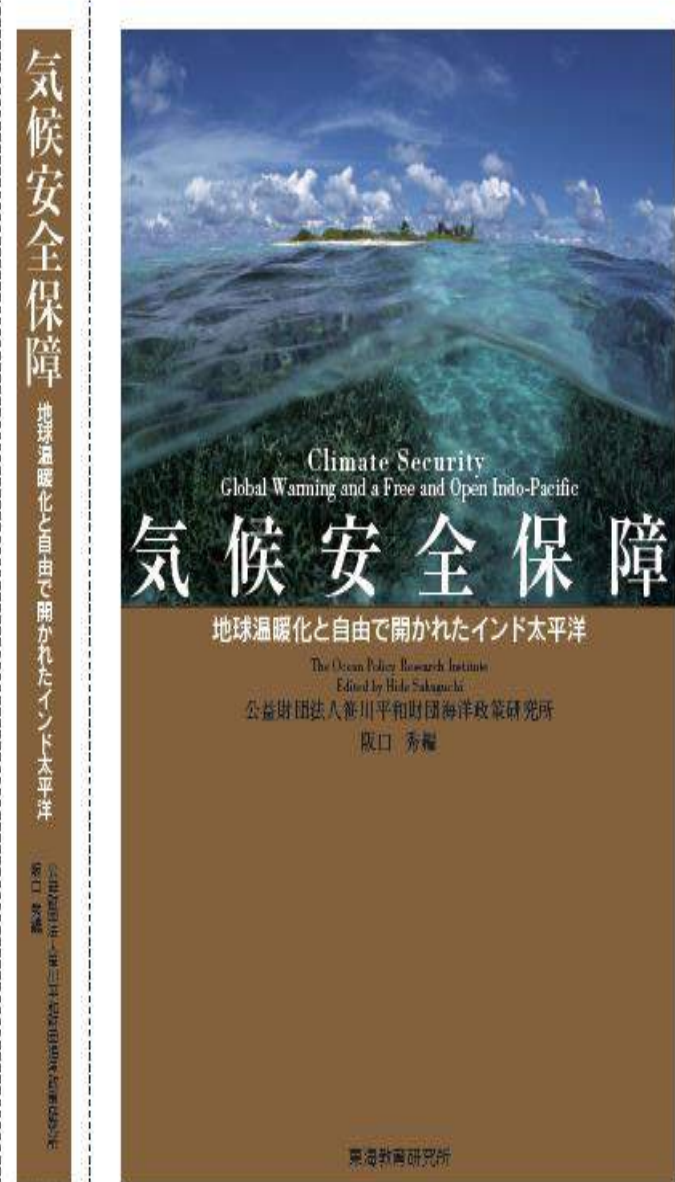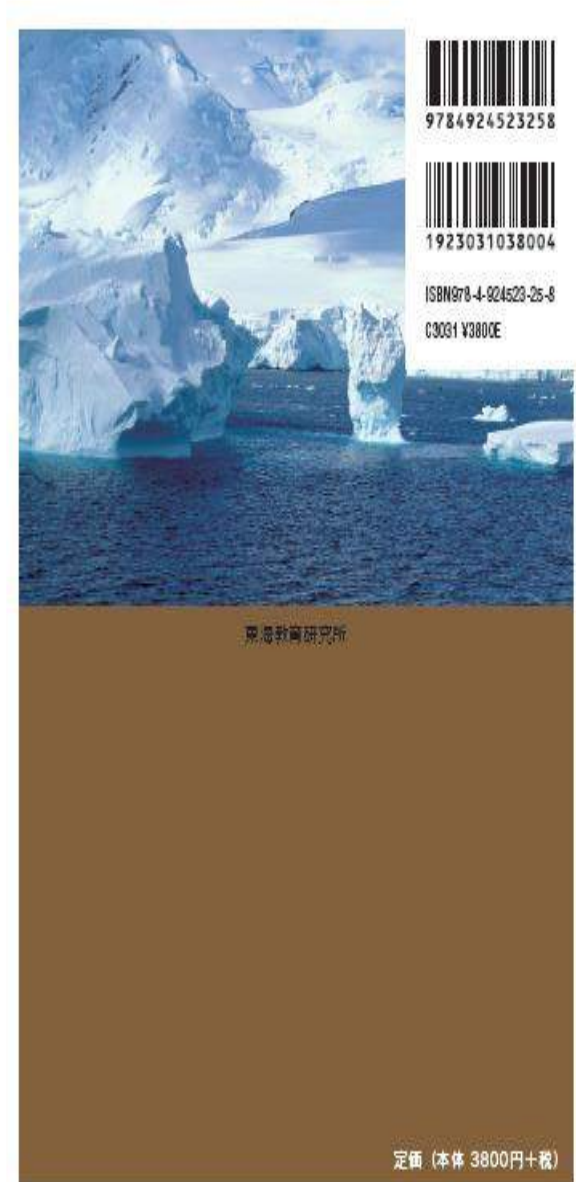
Book

**Climate Security
Global Warming and Free
and Open Indo-Pacific**

Ed. Hide Sakaguchi

Tokai University Press, Tokyo, 2021

the problem

- **By virtue of their shared geographic characteristics, the Pacific Islands nations have an overlapping set of shared vulnerabilities to the environmental and societal impacts of climate change.**

- **Direct security impacts are multifarious and include diminished access to fresh water, local food supply, coastal infrastructure damage, etc.**

- **For atoll island nations, climate-related sea level rise is an existential threat.**

"For the Pacific, climate change is not a hypothetical. It is real. And it is happening now."
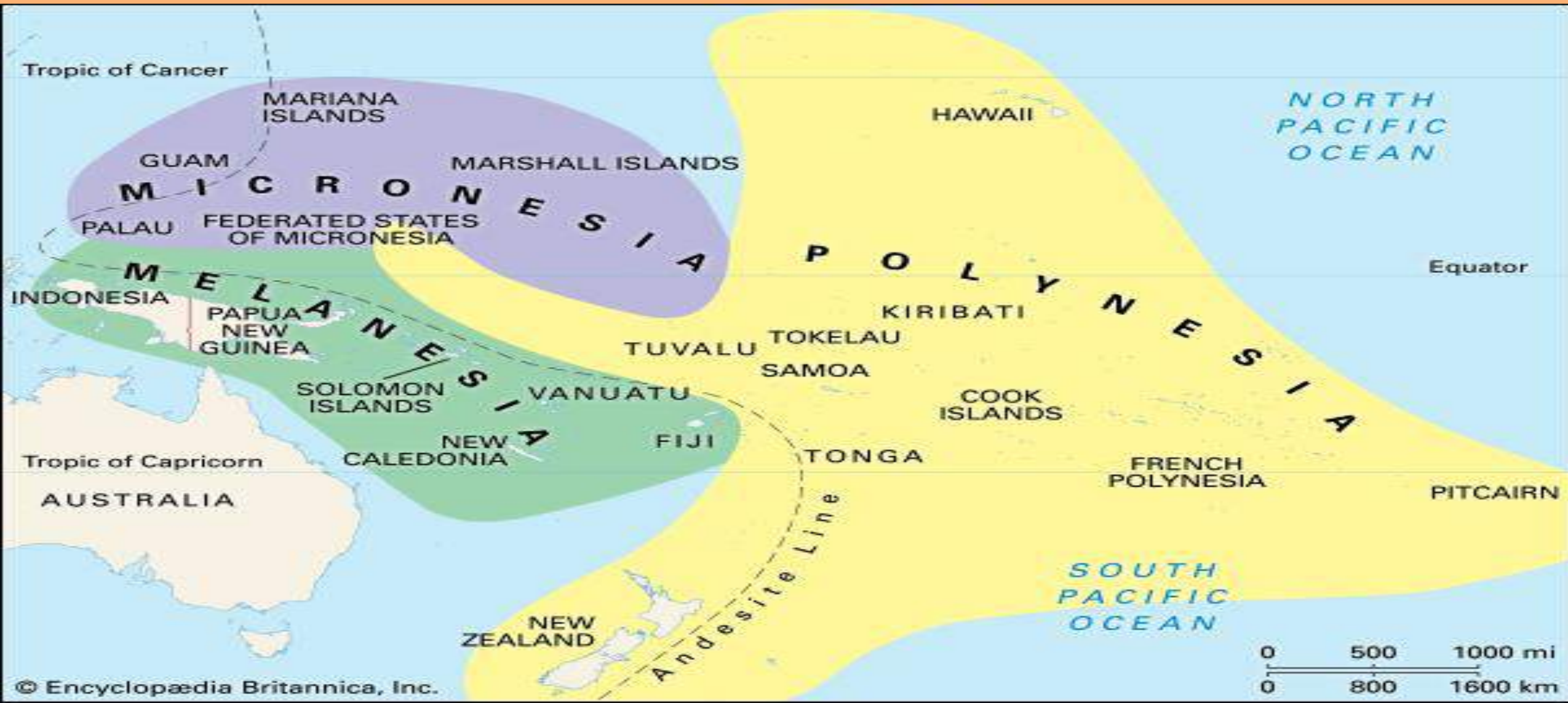
Jacinda Ardern
New Zealand Prime Minister
April 2018

NEW ZEALAND

Photo: Pedram Pirnia

… welcome to Indo-Pacific's "Blue Pacific"!

Pacific Oceanscape

Melanesia, Polynesia, Micronesia

© Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

POPULATION

- **12 million people**

- 9 million Papua New Guineans … and approximately 3 million additional inhabitants of other territories.

- the PIR has the highest concentration of microstates globally.

- *microstates = states with resident populations of less than half a million*

States and dependencies
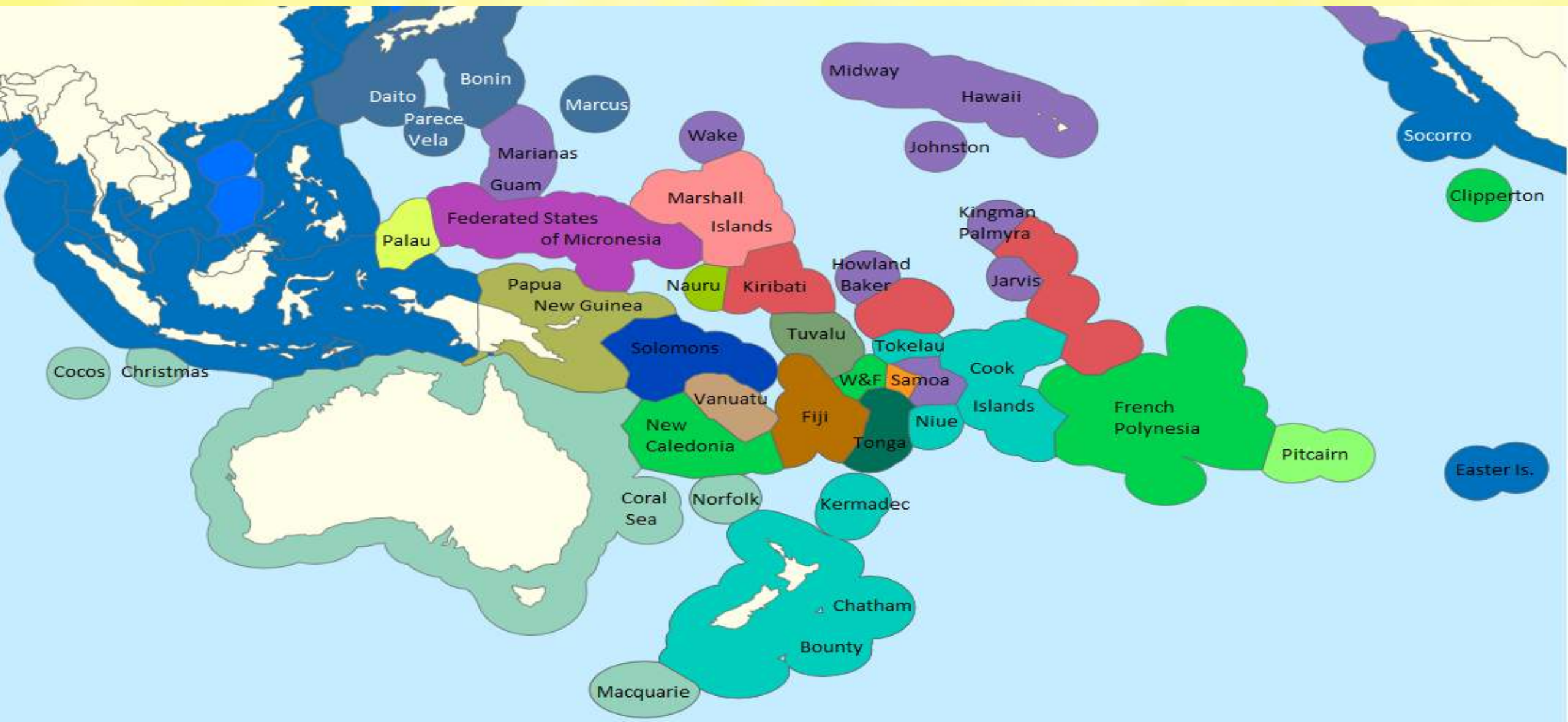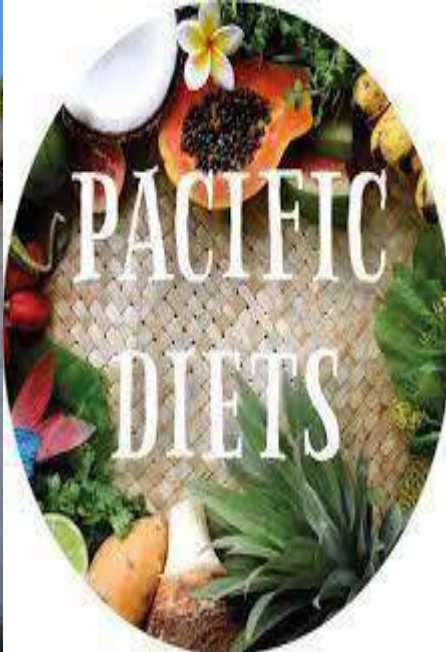
Renewed maritime 'awareness':
'Large ocean States'

- Renewed maritime 'awareness' is important for Pacific island states.

- In recent times they have repositioned themselves as *large ocean states*, rather than 'small island states'.

- Fourteen independent Pacific island states (+territories) are custodians of a huge swathe of the world's ocean and **have exclusive economic control of significant marine resources, notably the world's largest tuna fishery**.

- They also control access to *seabed minerals* that are sought after by many.

Transcending asymmetry @ Glocalization

- The notion of **glocalization** represents a challenge to simplistic conceptions of globalization processes as linear expansions of territorial scales.
- Local spaces are shaped and local identities are created by globalized contacts **as well as** by local circumstances.
- Thus, globalization entails neither the end of geography nor declining heterogeneity.
- Glocalizing processes can also be understood in **a three-level system** containing **1)** subnational (or local), **2)** national, and **3)** supranational (or global) levels.

[Joachim Blatter, "Glocalization", Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2013]

PACIFIC DIETS

Let's walk the talk, Promote Physical Activity, Outsmart Diabetes to live longer & healthier.

giz

'WE ARE SINKING': TUVALU MINISTER AT COP26

VANUATU DAILY POST
PLASTIC BAN

Defining "Security"

- Our understanding of security and what it entails has **moved well beyond** the claim that security studies should focus only on the threat, use and control of military force.

- **The scope for what constitutes 'security' has broadened significantly** and developed into a dynamic yet still unbalanced concept.

Regional Security:
Multi-dimensional & Multi-layered

- The **contemporary preoccupation with regional security** reflects

- a **confluence** of the **continuing relevance of traditional geostrategic calculations and the emergence of new security challenges**

- that have **redefined the content and scope of order** in the contemporary international system.

Traditional Threats (Defense)
- Threats to national territory
- Challenges to sovereignty & independence

Transnational Organized Crime (Public Security)
- Corruption
- Money laundering
- Human trafficking
- Illicit arms & drug trafficking
- Relationships among these factors

"Threats, concerns, and other challenges"

Terrorism
- Cyber Insecurities
- Weapons of Mass Destruction

Social & Environmental Vulnerabilities
- Extreme poverty & social exclusion
- Natural disasters (& human origin)
- HIV & pandemics (public health)
- Environmental degradation
- Accidents (dangerous materials)

Source: Mark D. Hamilton, 2016

Characteristics of Non-Traditional Security Issues

- The threats are **transnational in nature** with regards to their **origins, conceptions and effects**.
  - They do not stem from competition between states or shifts in the balance of power, but are **often defined in political and socioeconomic terms**.
  - Non-traditional security issues such as resource scarcity and irregular migration **cause societal and political instability and hence become threats to security**.
  - National solutions are often inadequate and would thus essentially **require regional and multilateral cooperation**.
  - **The referent of security is no longer just the state** (state sovereignty or territorial integrity), **but also the people** (survival, well-being, dignity) both at individual and societal levels.

[NTS-Asia – Consortium of Non-tradition Security Studies in Asia]

Climate Change: a non-traditional security issue

- "**Non-traditional security issues (NTSI)** are challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples and states that **arise primarily out of non-military sources.**

- such as climate change, resources scarcity, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking and transnational crime.

- These dangers are often transnational in scope, defying unilateral remedies and **requiring comprehensive – political, economic, social – responses**, as well as humanitarian use of military force."

[NTS-Asia – Consortium of Non-tradition Security Studies in Asia]

Defining climate security

- Climate security refers to the security risks induced, directly or indirectly, by changes in climate patterns.

- increasingly acknowledged among security experts, international institutions, and climate scientists: that climate change is a threat multiplier that has no boundaries. Rising global temperatures, and the attendant growing stress on natural resources, particularly water, and agricultural productivity, are threatening global security at multiple levels.

- different approaches to the relationship between climate change and security generate climate security discourses: national, regional, global, human, and ecological security discourses.

Security impacts of climate change

Climate effects

- Rising temperatures
- Melting ice
- Sea level rise
- Ocean acidification
- Intensifying cyclones
- More or less rainfall
- Floods / droughts
- Heatwaves

Environmental impacts

- Coral bleaching
- Decreasing fish stocks and marine life
- Coastal erosion
- Increase in soil salinity
- Unproductive land (non cultivable and eventually uninhabitable land)

Social impacts*

- Loss of livelihood
- Water and food scarcity
- Increase in malnutrition
- Loss of jobs / education opportunities
- Loss of cultural identity
- Damage to community infrastructure
- Climate migration

Security implications

- Human security challenges
- Health-related crises
- Resource competition (food and water security)
- Violence from mismanaged adaptation or migration
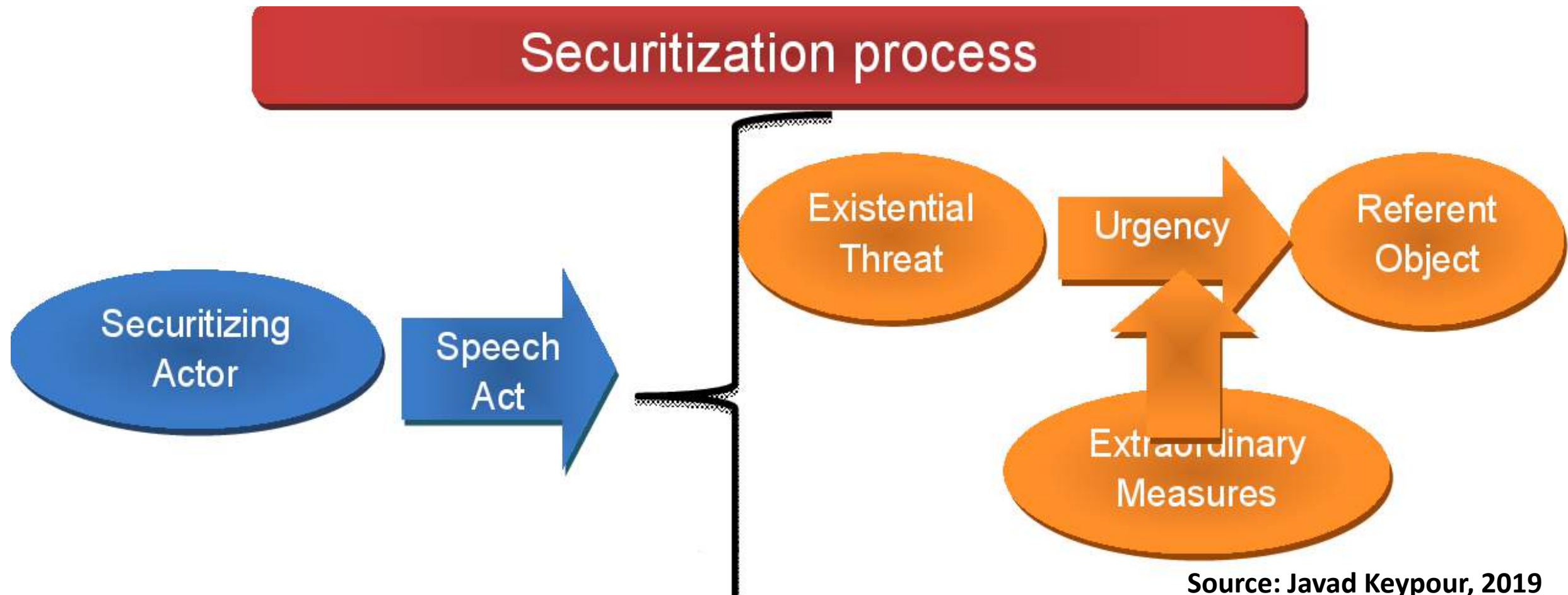- Land disputes

Magnified by weak governance

The impacts of climate change will become more pronounced as time goes on

*Social impacts are often interconnected with economic and political factors

Securitization in international relations is the process of state actors transforming subjects into matters of "security".

Source: Javad Keypour, 2019

PIR 'Regional security' concerns for the 'traditional powers' (a.k.a. 'the West')

'Regional security' concerns for the Pacific Island nations = climate security

- "Geostrategic competition is blinding countries from the threat of climate change in the Pacific."
- [Dr Patrick Schröder, Senior Research Fellow, Environment and Society Centre -- 7 JULY 2022]

The Boe Declaration on Regional Security (2018): The "Rosetta Stone" of the Pacific Islands' regional agenda in the new Indo-Pacific 'reality'

The "speech act" securitizing climate change:
Boe Declaration on Regional Security (2018)

- "(i) We reaffirm that **climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific** and our commitment to progress the implementation of the Paris Agreement;

- (ii) We recognise an **increasingly complex regional security environment driven by multifaceted security challenges** , and a dynamic geopolitical environment leading to an increasingly crowded and complex region;

- (iii) We affirm our stewardship of the Blue Pacific and aspire to strengthen and **enhance our capacity to pursue our collective security interests** given our responsibility to sustain our Pacific peoples and our resources;"

[Forum Leaders]

Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now (2019)

Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now

Securing the Future of our Blue Pacific

1. We, the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, meeting in Tuvalu see first-hand the impacts and implications of the climate change crisis facing our Pacific Island Nations.

2. Right now, climate change and disasters are impacting all our countries. Our seas are rising, oceans are warming, and extreme events such as cyclones and typhoons, flooding, drought and king tides are frequently more intense, inflicting damage and destruction to our communities and ecosystems and putting the health of our peoples at risk. All around the world, people affected by disaster and climate change-induced displacement are losing their homes and livelihoods, particularly the most vulnerable atoll nations.

3. As Leaders, we reflect and acknowledge the substantial work and investment over two and half decades of climate change negotiations, commitments, and scientific advancements, all intended to avert the crisis we now face. However, we are concerned that progress within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) must keep pace with the challenges we face today and in the future, in line with the *Boe Declaration on Regional Security*.

4. We hear the voices of our youth and the most vulnerable within our societies, having a loud and resounding impact. In amplifying the alarm we have been sounding for decades, including the youth of Tuvalu who called for the preservation of their homeland and culture. We welcome the

six compound climate-fragility risk clusters

- *Drawing from the available literature - as well as from the examination of the Pacific Islands' socio-economic dynamics, regional policies and political discourse -* it is possible to identify six compound climate-fragility risk clusters ...

- 1) climate change-induced displacement and migration
- 2) impacts on ocean economy (fisheries, tourism, etc.)
- 3) impacts on health, food and water security
- 4) natural disaster recurrence and coping capacity
- 5) Impacts of sea-level rise on maritime zones and boundaries
- 6) Penetration of transnational organized crime and terrorism.

Pacific Islands
"Climate Change Regional Security Complex"

- "A regional security complex has been defined as a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another." (Buzan, 1991)

Cooperation areas for managing climate change:

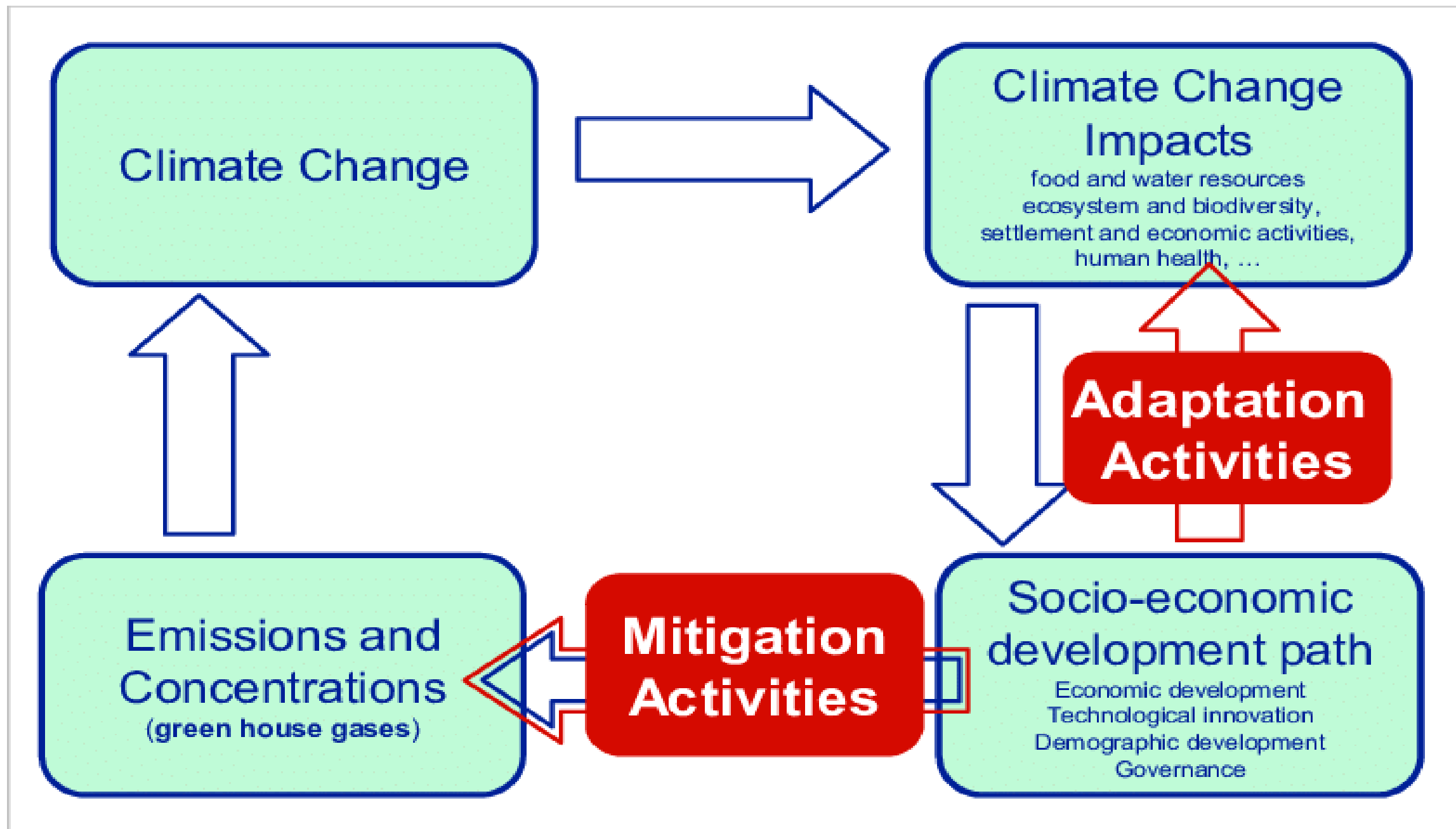Responding to climate change involves two possible approaches:

Mitigation: reducing and stabilizing the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere

and/or

Adaptation: adapting to the climate change already in the pipeline

plus

- *knowledge creation and dissemination in support of those initiatives*

Climate Change

Climate Change Impacts
food and water resources
ecosystem and biodiversity,
settlement and economic activities,
human health, ...

Adaptation Activities

Socio-economic development path
Economic development
Technological innovation
Demographic development
Governance

Mitigation Activities

Emissions and Concentrations
(green house gases)

A trans-generational endeavor

- Climate change - both manmade and natural - is a **chronic problem** that will require continued management over the coming centuries. Acting on climate change is thus **a trans-generational endeavor**.

- The extreme rhetoric on climate change is making political agreement on climate change policies more difficult, while security deteriorates.

- We can **avoid much of the political gridlock** by implementing **collaborative strategies** that are sci&tech enhanced, lift people out of poverty and make them more resilient to climate change.

Ways Ahead

- "With relatively small populations and limited resources, Pacific Island countries and territories should pursue **highly collaborative strategies** to manage climate change threats.

- **Interagency, cross-sectoral, regional and international collaborations** are in order to represent common interests, to forge consensus approaches, to combine physical and intellectual resources, and to **maximize the influence of Pacific Island countries and territories in the global arena**.

- **N.B.** Global mitigation outcomes will **depend primarily** on the actions of large countries that are responsible for most carbon emissions."

[J. Scott Hauger, 2015]

Climate security discourse in the Pacific Islands
3 vectors:
1) Politics/Diplomacy
2) Science/Academia
3) Civil society/Ecopoetics

MEDIA

Oceania is us

CLIMATE SECURITY
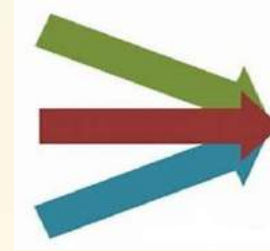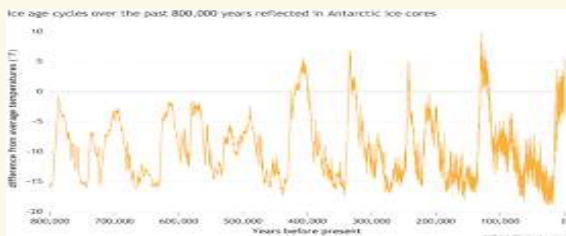
The "Pacific Way": consensus and collective diplomacy

- Traditionally, Pacific diplomacy is often characterized as the **"Pacific Way" or consensus diplomacy by island states.**

- With small administrations compared to Pacific Rim countries, **the need to share diplomatic resources and associations** is fundamental for effective Pacific diplomacy.

- Collective diplomacy has produced a number of successes for the Pacific at both regional and global levels.

- Pacific Island nations' multilateral diplomacy asserts an identity based on shared challenges.

- This principle fueled the 2010 lobbying by Pacific missions in New York to obtain unique recognition within the Asian grouping at the United Nations (UN) as the Group of Asia and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)

Owning and shaping the regional security agenda

- "Recognising the importance we placed on ==an expanded concept of security== inclusive of human security, humanitarian assistance, ==prioritising environmental security==, and regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters and climate change, including through regional cooperation and support;

- Respecting the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of Forum Members; and; Recognising the need to strengthen regional security cooperation and collective action through the assertion of **==Our Will and the voices of Our Pacific Peoples==**."

Ecopoetics: a narrative vector

- **Ecopoetics: poetically (spiritually, holistically) describing and addressing ecological processes, crises and transformations**

- it is "poetry" that confronts environmental injustices, emergencies, disasters … or environmental recovery and re-birth.

- It is "poetry" that joins in the push for an environmentally sustainable regional economy and development model.

- **The ecopoetics discourse complements those of politics/diplomacy and science/academia in shaping the Pacific Islands' regional security outlook and priorities**

THE UW PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY PRESENTS

POEMS FROM A MARSHALLESE DAUGHTER

POETRY OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND NUCLEAR TESTING

WITH POET, SPOKEN WORD ARTIST, AND ACTIVIST KATHY JETNIL-KIJINER

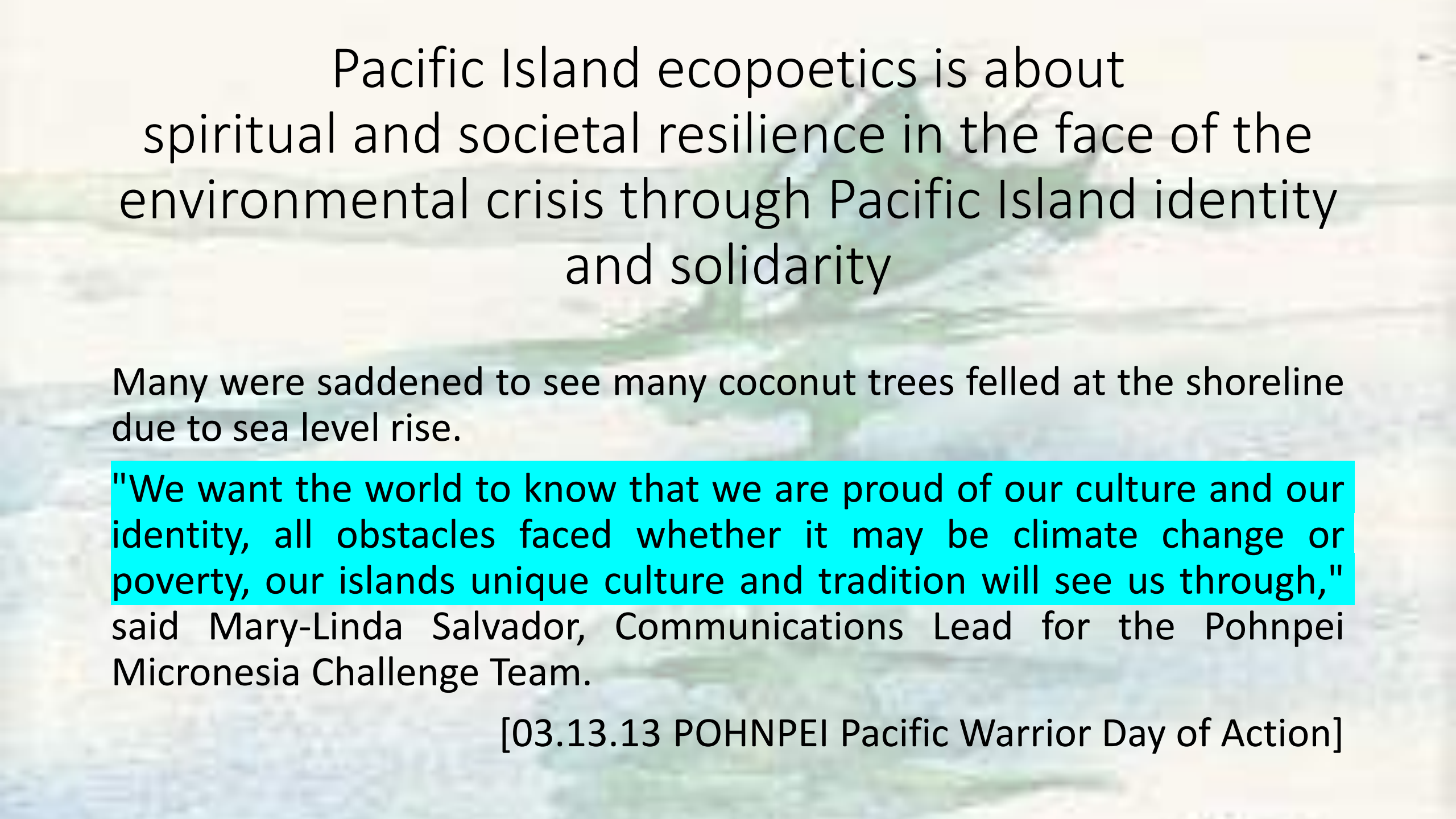POETRY READING AND DISCUSSION | APRIL 11, 2018 UW INTELLECTUAL HOUSE | 5:00-9:00PM FREE ADMISSION

Ecopoetics: examples - 2

"What do we say to our ancestors

When all the fish are gone

If we fail to protect our home

And all our future children to come

Their hope lies in us."

[Te Vaka, *Our Ocean*]

Pacific Island ecopoetics is about spiritual and societal resilience in the face of the environmental crisis through Pacific Island identity and solidarity

Many were saddened to see many coconut trees felled at the shoreline due to sea level rise.

"We want the world to know that we are proud of our culture and our identity, all obstacles faced whether it may be climate change or poverty, our islands unique culture and tradition will see us through," said Mary-Linda Salvador, Communications Lead for the Pohnpei Micronesia Challenge Team.

[03.13.13 POHNPEI Pacific Warrior Day of Action]

Pacific Island Ecopoetics is (also) about being heard by the global community and recognized as the climate change/environmental security frontline
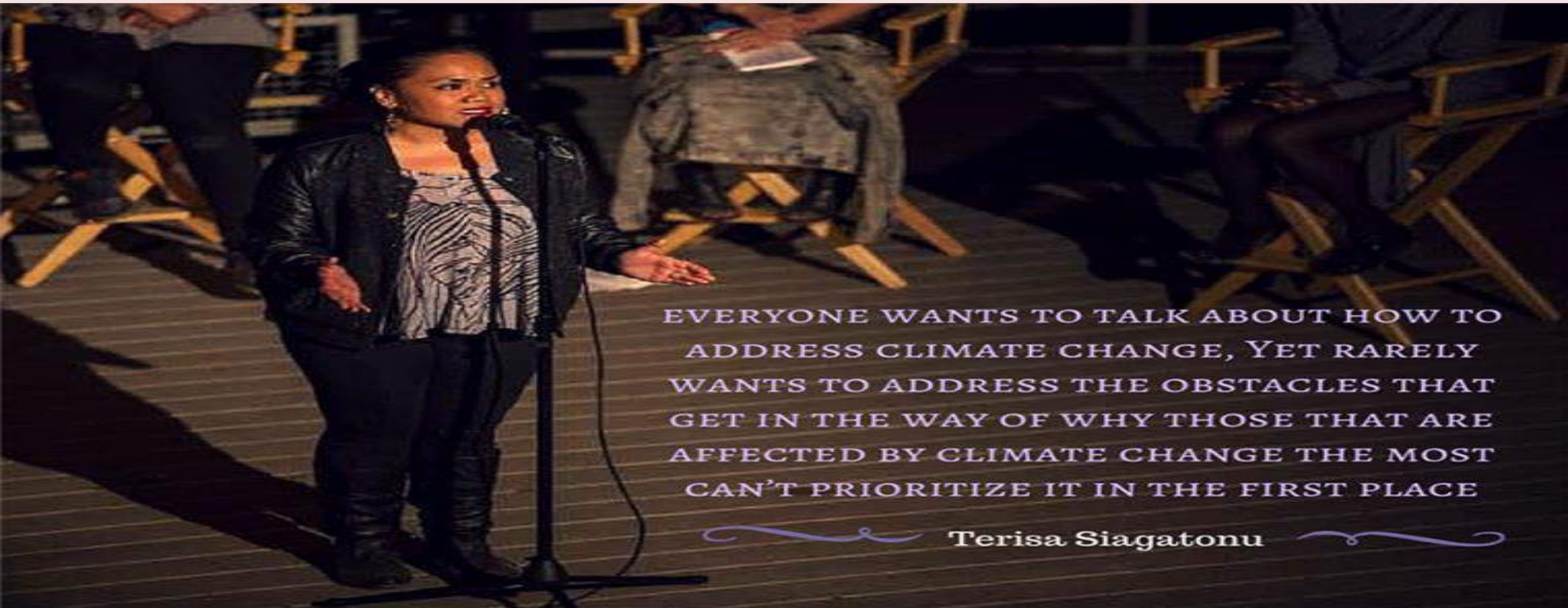
EVERYONE WANTS TO TALK ABOUT HOW TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE, YET RARELY WANTS TO ADDRESS THE OBSTACLES THAT GET IN THE WAY OF WHY THOSE THAT ARE AFFECTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE THE MOST CAN'T PRIORITIZE IT IN THE FIRST PLACE

Terisa Siagatonu

"Our Sea of Islands":
The nexus between the political and the spiritual mandate

- *"Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us.*

- ***We are the sea, we are the ocean**, we must wake up to this ancient truth and **together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again**, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces which we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed place, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves.*

- *We must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom."*

[Epeli Hau'ofa, Our Sea of Islands, 1993]

Ecopolitics matters. A lot.

- "Few serious scholars or policy makers believe, in our day and age, that the **connection between environmental problems and international relations (IR)** can be ignored. In fact, the need to explore **global ecopolitics, or the links between ecological crises and global politics**, has been made clear in North American circles from the 1960s and on."

    [Eric Laferrière and Peter J. Stoett, *International Ecopolitical Theory: Critical Approaches*, 2006]

- "[…] the **ecopolitical cannot be separated from the ecopoetic** and […] the rhetorics of our relation to each other and to the natural world not only matter but become part of the matter of the world."

    [Loveday Why, *A Poetics of Water: Cross-Cultural Ecopoetics in a Crisis World*, 2017]

Ecopoetics/Ecopolitics ➡️ climate diplomacy & policies

- The ecopoetics/ecopolitics dimension is important for designing and conducting climate diplomacy and policies towards/with the Pacific Island nations.

Because …

- In the Pacific Islands it's not just a matter of what you may say, but also of **how** you say it.

Because …

- It helps **aligning** one's climate security discourse and priorities with those of the Pacific Islanders, thus …

- It builds confidence … shared vision & values … and a "community of destiny" identity-based trust = relational competitive advantage

- Geopolitical alignment (climate security alliance). = geopolitical competitive advantage

- *"Climate security is what states make of it."*

Nota Bene: In the Pacific islands, "militant" ecopoetics/ecopolitics did not start with climate change, but with protesting nuclear testing in the region and the devastation caused by phosphate mining.

"Climate ideas" frame interests and create coalitions

- **As the most vocal actors in regional climate action**, Pacific Islands nations have been/are **calling for attention** for the unique vulnerabilities of the small and low-lying islands to climate change, and **promoting the need for collective action** to address them. Regionally and globally.

- **'Climate ideas'** inform and shape the Pacific Islands' interests in regional politics and cooperation.

- **Ideas can strategically shape policy thinking** 'to frame interests, mobilize supporters, … build coalitions', merge and recast common interests, and shape political power relations (Béland & Cox).

Shared ideas create an ideational process of interactions among states where their mutual decisions are driven by those ideas.
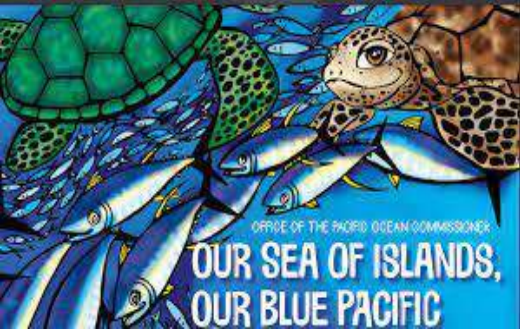
- Climate action -
- 'Blue Pacific' -
- Climate change adaptation laboratories -

- For the Pacific Island nations, **'climate action'** has emerged as a necessary means to their own survival and development.

- Their **'regionalism through partnership'** and **'Blue Pacific'** approach to regional order and security have been influenced by the impact of climate change and sustainable development issues.

- By necessity, Pacific Islands have become **hubs of innovation**, where climate strategies are tested and refined to inform adaptation efforts globally.

- Ex: In 2020 **Five Pacific Island countries** have approved **national State of the Environment reports** in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating continued commitment and attention to the importance of environmental action and environmental monitoring and reporting at the national level. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) – the regional environment organization in the Pacific – assisted the countries in the development of the reports.
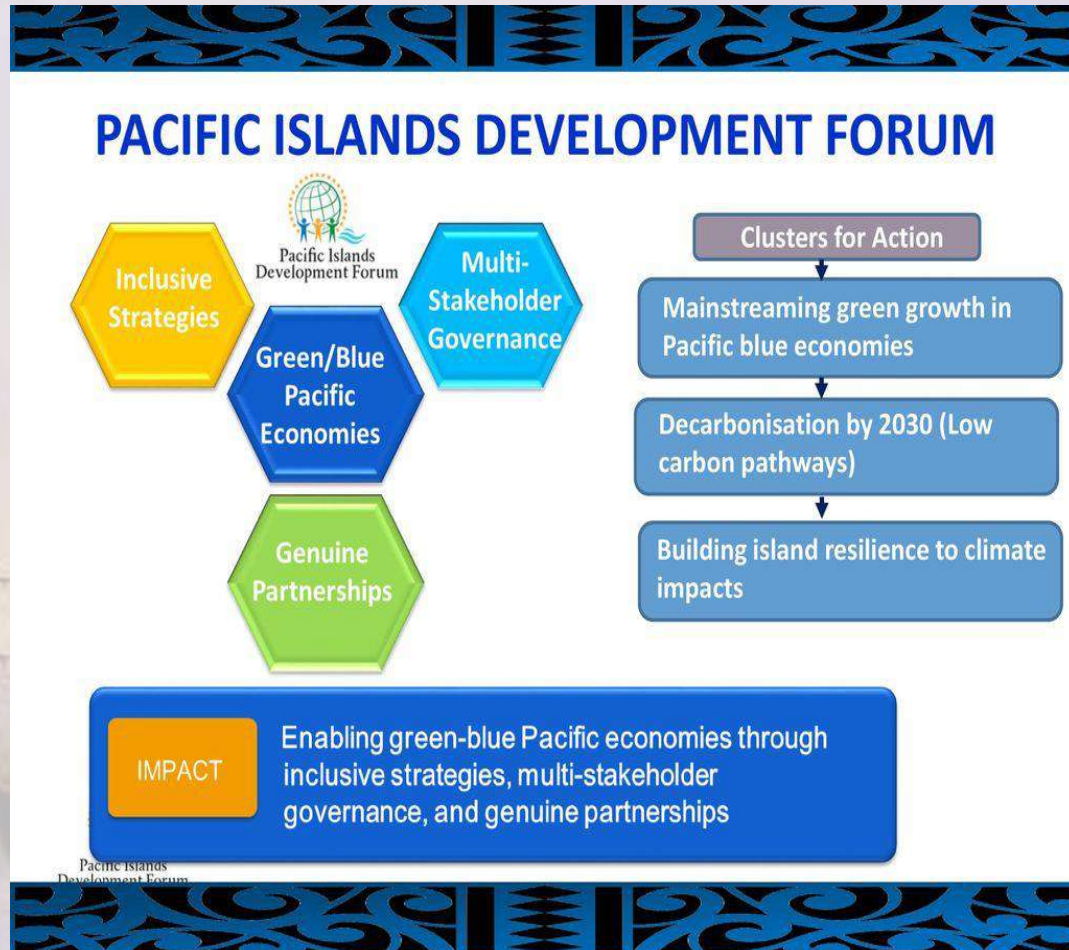
"Blue Pacific": a holistic and strategic approach

- Under the concept of the **'Blue Pacific'**, island nations are placing increased priority on the oceans, seeking to **integrate policy** on climate change, maritime security, fisheries and ocean biodiversity.

- "Leaders endorsed the development of a **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent,** while acknowledging the need for urgent, immediate actions on the threats and challenges of climate change facing the Blue Pacific and realising the health and wellbeing of Pacific people to secure a bright and prosperous future for the Pacific."

[50th PIF Communiqué, 2019]

Building a sustainable Pacific Society through Green/Blue Pacific Economies

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Programme

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Programme is the first major climate change adaptation initiative in the Pacific region, aiming to reducing climate vulnerability and promoting more resilient Pacific communities that are able to cope with climate variability today and climate change tomorrow.

- The PACC Programme is a **partnership between several key regional agencies and national agencies and communities in 14 Pacific island countries**. It is funded by the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) Special Climate Change Fund and the Australian Government, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as its implementing agency and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) as implementing partner. The Project is supported by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) C3D+programme.

- Working in 14 Pacific island countries, PACC is demonstrating **best-practice adaptation in three key climate-sensitive areas**: coastal zone management, food security and food production, and water resources management.

Climate change & development partners competition

- **Climate change problematics** have significantly influenced the Pacific Islands' new purposes and expectations also in dealing with **regional issues associated with rising competition between development partners in the region**.

- **Longstanding regional partners have a strong incentive** to formulate their climate change discourses (and aid policies) in a way appealing to the island states in order to maintain closeness of relations.

Thank You

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