

From the Desk of the Director

The festive season is still in the mood around and the New Year 2018 is upon us. We want to update you about the busy quarter in the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States. At the same time, being on a cusp of a holiday season continuing from 2017 and festivities of a New Year, we also have an opportunity to reflect on the past year and on our many accomplishments, challenges, disappointments and wonderful providences. Therefore, I hope we will give ourselves some meaningful time to draw learning, discern the non-essential and the essential from among the variety of work we did and engagements we had in 2017 to plan a good year.

My colleagues and I are always grateful to partners and stakeholders in the Pacific for supporting us in our work. On behalf of my colleagues and the Organization, I want to offer best wishes for a peaceful New Year to all. We also want to take a moment to say "Thank You" to the colleagues from the wider UN System, in particular, the Resident Coordinator Offices in Fiji, the PNG and Samoa, for their support to UNESCO's participation in the UN development assistance strategies and working and theme groups.

We thank the National Commissions whose active engagement in the UNESCO General Conference was remarkable and whose partnerships have been an essential element of task accomplishments at the country-level.

We renewed and bolstered partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC) with them becoming a permanent observer of the Pacific Tsunami Warning System of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO). We thank the SPC for continuously working with us on multi-sector issues and hosting the IOC-UNESCO staff-post in Suva.

It is also time to thank the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat for excellent collaboration with the UNESCO for the education sector and on the issue of inclusion of persons with disability.

We thank the University of the South Pacific for some deeper discussions about cooperation. USP has been a longstanding partner of UNESCO as a university, as the host of the Pacific Heritage Hub, and in 2017, by becoming a founding institutional partner of the UNESCO UNITWIN Network on Science for Pacific Small Island Developing States (Science for Sustainability in Oceania). The other three founding members we thank are the Massey University, Unitec Institute of Technology and the National University of Samoa.

We thank the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization for including UNESCO's work on hydrology during the 4th Session of the Pacific Meteorological Council this year.



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There are a number of ministries and public institutions of the Member States in the Pacific who we thank for good collaboration and are extremely grateful for their support. While I am unable to name each one here due to space constraints, I do want to say a big thank you to the Government of Samoa. In the context of support for multilateralism, Samoa has demonstrated its support by offering the UN System based in the country a rent-free new premises to set up the One UN House. Once the One UN House is fully set up and we are able to move in there, it will enable us to achieve important progress on our programmatic agenda for the Pacific by enabling the UN Organizations to work together collectively in the spirit of the UN reforms.

In the New Year, we have some big issues to face up to, including climate change and ocean health, water scarcity and quality, cultural development, inclusive social development, and improved access to information to name a few. We are pleased that the rest of the UN System as well as other organizations in the region share many of our areas for programming. This gives us the opportunity to seek and work collaboratively in partnership with others.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support and hard work of my colleagues and wish the wider UNESCO family the very best as we continue moving forward.

We take the opportunity to welcome the new colleagues: Gail, Shengru, and Yi. We are also pleased to welcome two babies, Ifo and Sia's newborns into our flock. You will find information about all the above in this edition of the newsletter.

Beginning of a year is a good time to think of matters intrinsic and begin working on what inspires us. Let us strive to breakthrough whatever challenges come our way in 2018. I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful, happy and professionally satisfying year ahead.

New Caledonia admitted as Associate Member of UNESCO

The 39th Session of the UNESCO's General Conference voted on 30 October 2017 to admit New Caledonia as an Associate Member of UNESCO. New Caledonia's entry brought the number of UNESCO's Associate Members to 11.

It is to be remembered that the Lagoons of New Caledonia were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2008. The Lagoons comprise of six marine clusters forming a property of 1,574,300 ha with a buffer zone of 1,287,100 ha, represent the main diversity of coral reefs and associated ecosystems in the French Pacific Ocean archipelago of New Caledonia and one of the three most extensive reef systems in the world. The Lagoons of New Caledonia display intact ecosystems, with healthy populations of large predators, and a great number and diversity of big fish. They provide habitat to a number of emblematic or threatened marine species such as turtles, whales or dugongs whose population here is the third largest in the world.

We welcome New Caledonia among our Member-States and are looking forward to more engagements in the Pacific.

Audrey Azoulay (France), the new UNESCO Director General



The President of the 39th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO, Mr Zohour Alaoui, congratulated the new Director-General at the end of a vote that endorsed the choice of the Executive Board. Born in 1972, Ms Azoulay was France's Minister of Culture and Communication from February 2016 to May 2017. Ms Azoulay is the 11th Director-General of UNESCO and the second woman to occupy this position.

UN declares Decade of Ocean Science



Recalling that marine science is important for eradicating poverty, contributing to food security, conserving the world's marine environment and resources, helping to understand, predict and respond to natural events and promoting the sustainable development of the oceans and seas, by improving knowledge, through sustained research efforts and the evaluation of monitoring results, and applying such knowledge to management and decision-making,



THE people of the Pacific are described as 'people of the sea'. The ocean is life to them and they are also the life of the ocean.

The recently adopted United Nations International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development brings about hope, for the 17 small developing island states scattered over the largest and deepest of the Earth's oceanic division, which is the Pacific Ocean.

In September 2017, members of the Pacific Islands Forum met in Apia Samoa, for their 48th meeting that was themed –“The Blue Pacific, our Sea of islands, and our Security through Sustainable development, management and conservation”.

In this meeting, the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum member countries deliberated on the common challenges affecting their fisheries resources and the adverse impacts of climate change to the ocean and to their lands.

The Decade of Ocean Science for Development is another promising platform that can ensure support to member states of the Pacific region in addressing challenges affecting their Blue Pacific Ocean.

Within ten years onwards from 2021, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the UNESCO will take the lead in close collaboration with partners to report to the Member States on the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and its implementation.

The overall goals that the IOC- UNESCO and all its partners will work towards achieving in this decade include;

- Enhancing sustainable use of ocean and marine resources including a focus on: making an inventory of ocean resources and ecosystem services; understanding and quantifying bio-geographical zones and the potential role of marine protected areas;
- Expanding use of knowledge about the ocean conditions including data management, data gathering, modelling, forecasting ocean food productivity and evaluating its capacity to meet growing demands;
- Supporting the development of the ocean economy including analyses of economic and social benefits from the sustainable use of marine resources and science-based management;
- Sustainable management of coastal ecosystems including ecosystem resilience and marine spatial planning to minimize impacts of sea-level rise, extreme weather events, flooding and erosion, improvements of baselines on environmental conditions and public perceptions;
- Increasing scientific knowledge about the impacts of cumulative interacting stressors such as warming, acidification and habitat destruction;
- Achieving integrated observations and data sharing including the use of satellites, fixed and moving observing platforms, all feeding into common data management and the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS).



THE Pacific Community (SPC) has been granted Permanent Observer status to the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG PTWS). This followed discussions initiated by UNESCO Apia Office Director with SPC and subsequent exchange of letters between IOC of UNESCO and SPC in November.

Under the IOC, the ICG for PTWS coordinates tsunami warning and mitigation programmes with its member countries and disaster risk reduction agencies within and bordering the Pacific. ICG sessions are held biennially and PTWS Steering Committee meets in between ICG sessions to advance seismic and tsunami detection, issuance of timely and credible warning, and improve community response and preparedness.

SPC, the principal scientific and technical regional organisation, is mandated to deal with disaster mitigation in the Pacific. The Disaster and Community Resilience Programme within SPC provides Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) with technical and policy advice and support to strengthen disaster risk management practices. It is co-signatory to the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management.

The grant of Observer status to SPC is expected to be mutually beneficial to the two organizations in their efforts to minimise the impact of tsunami hazard in the region.

Supporting the Pacific Framework for the Rights of People with Disabilities 2016-2025

In supporting the implementation of the Pacific Framework for the Rights of PWDs 2016-25, particularly on Goal 5 on evidence building, UNESCO commissioned a review of disability inclusive development in the Pacific. The activity serves to take stock of the current literature on disability inclusive development in the region, identify strategic prioritisation of areas for evidence building as part of Goal 5 of the Regional Framework and for UNESCO's interventions.

Through desk review and stakeholder consultation, the review identifies the current challenges and progress of disability inclusion in the development framework in comparison with international and regional standards. A number of programmatic areas were analysed including climate change, education, women and girls, and stigmatization against PWDs. The review also identifies gaps in disability mainstreaming across development policies and programmes at the regional and national level. While most countries have developed relevant policies to address the issue of exclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs), the mainstreaming of disability inclusion in programmatic and sectoral policies and programmes varies greatly across countries. In some national development plans, disability is recognized as a cross-cutting issue, whereas in others the rights of PWDs are only referenced under certain policy objectives



[©UNESCO] Ms. Flavia Schlegel (UNESCO Assistant Director General for the Natural Sciences) discusses loss and damage in the Pacific as a distinguished panel, including H.E. Hon. Frank Bainimarama, President of CoP23 and Hon. Pawel Salek, Poland, incoming President of CoP24 reviews UNESCO/USP PaCe-SD materials on loss and damage in Pacific SIDS

THE 23rd Convention of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Bonn, Germany in November 2017 provided an opportunity to highlight some of UNESCO's activities in the Pacific. A highlight was UNESCO's participation in the High Level Event on Loss and Damage and the 2030 Agenda, which featured participation by the Presidents of CoP23 (Fiji) and CoP24 (Poland), the distinguished Minister of Environment of Maldives and high level UN Officials.

In her intervention, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, Ms. Flavia Schlegel, focused on how loss and damage is affecting communities in Pacific Island Countries and Territories, arguing that it is threatening their food and water security, livelihoods, health, and cultural heritage.

This according to research carried out by UNESCO and the University of the South Pacific's Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (USP-PaCE-SD).

Working with communities in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, the project "Towards Climate Change Resilience: Minimising loss and damage in Pacific SIDS communities" showed the complex interplay of factors leading to loss and damage at the community level and pinpointed particular issues for further attention during adaptation efforts.

In the Solomon Islands, for instance, communities in the Langalanga Lagoon are losing their cropland and struggling to save their houses and villages from storm surges, but have limited access to alternative resources.

The project aimed to support communities to understand and effectively communicate these issues in all their complexity to decision-makers with a view to developing tailored, bottom-up adaptation strategies.

For more information, visit the "Towards Climate Change Resilience" webpage [<http://www.unesco.org/new/index.php?id=132944>] or



[©UNESCO] Professor Elizabeth Holland (Director, USP-PaCE-SD), Nigel Crawhall (Chief, Small Islands and Indigenous Knowledge Section, UNESCO), Khalissa Ikhlef (Assistant Programme Specialist, Small Islands and Indigenous Knowledge Section, UNESCO)

Bringing UNESCO IHP to the Pacific



THE UNESCO Conference on Water Security in the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (SIDS): Bringing UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) to the Pacific that was held in Fiji in October, brought together about 40 participants that included UNESCO water experts, government water focal points and development partners in the Pacific.

The Minister for Fiji's Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure Hon. Parveen Kumar Bala in his keynote address acknowledged the opportunity for the participants to review water security issues in the Pacific and looking towards close collaborations with the UNESCO IHP and partners to address these challenges.

The UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) has placed water security at the heart of its eighth phase (2014-2021) defining it as "the capacity of a population to safeguard access to adequate quantities of water of acceptable quality for sustaining human and ecosystem health on a watershed basis, and to ensure efficient protection of life and property against water related hazards -- floods, landslides, land subsidence and droughts" (UNESCO, 2014). Water and water security issues are strongly featured in the sustainable development goals with water security related targets in nine out of seventeen goals (1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 14 and 15). Water also features prominently in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR, 2015) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2015).

Water is a pressing issue for all Pacific SIDS, with countries and individual islands facing droughts, demographic pressures, and increasing demands related to economic development and urbanization.

On some islands, namely atolls, there is little or only non-potable groundwater, leaving them particularly vulnerable to sea level rise, changes in rainfall patterns and drought.

Some Pacific SIDS have recently suffered a serious drought affecting crops and requiring emergency measures to ensure water supplies (Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Vanuatu). Other countries are working to assure water quality and to put in place integrated resource management strategies that will enable them to ensure the sustainability of their water supply in a context of climate change and economic

The Conference provided a platform for government water focal points from Nauru, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Tuvalu, Niue, Tokelau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Cook Islands, Samoa and Fiji to share information on the unique water security challenges in their own countries.

From this conference the focal points also learned about the opportunities and benefits of the UNESCO IHP that can contribute to address these water security issues.





A Multi-stakeholder Consultation on Tuvalu National Culture Policy (TNCP): Strategic Plan 2018-2024 was held in Funafuti from 17 to 18 October 2017.

The Consultation was organised by the Culture Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development of Tuvalu in cooperation with the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States.

The development of TNCP was identified as priority in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2016-2020) (TK III) of Tuvalu.

Some ten officials representing different Departments of the Ministries and Offices (Education, Environment, Health, Tourism, Community and Youth, Gender Equality, and Climate Change), as well as five representatives of Falekaupule (local government), the Women's Committee and the Youth Committee of the outer islands of Tuvalu based in Funafuti attended this Consultation in order to examine the draft TNCP developed through extensive consultative process in 2016 and 2017 and finalise the TNCP's Road Map, in particular, Objective 5 to integrate culture in sustainable development.

Each Department made a presentation of its sectoral plan. Based on that, the participants discussed strategic actions and outcomes that could be achieved through inter-sectoral cooperation and coordination.

These actions included, among others, integrate Tuvaluan heritage contents and arts into the formal and non-formal education, support the Tuvaluan studies, promote locally managed protected areas for environmental protection, safeguard and revitalise the intangible cultural heritage such as fishing and agriculture methods and skills for food security, traditional knowledge of weather and navigation for climate change adaptation, promote research with community on the efficacy of traditional herbal medicine and healing practices, identify and document culturally significant sites and support cultural festivals to promote cultural tourism, support the cultural production for inclusive economic development especially for women and youth.

The discussions shed light on culture as enabler for sustainable development, highlighting the importance of culturally sensitive approach and the community engagement to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Tuvalu.

The outcome of the Consultation fed into the TNCP and the updated TNCP was presented at the Development Coordination Committee of Tuvalu before it being formally endorsed by Cabinet towards the end of the year.



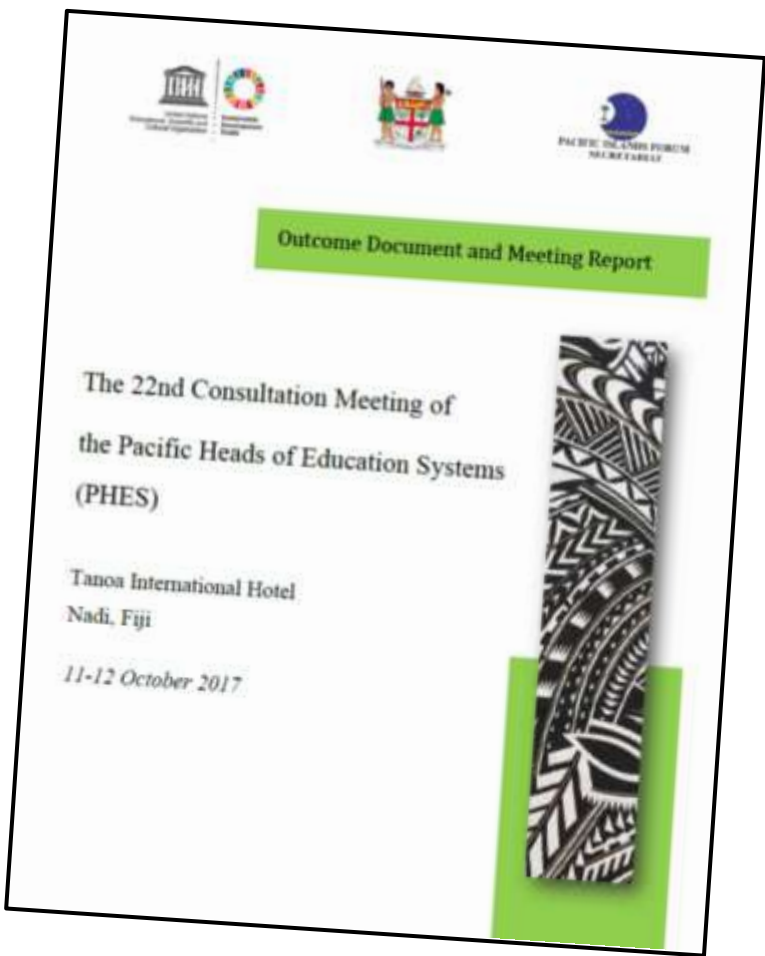


THE 22nd Pacific Heads of Education System (PHES) Consultation Meeting brought together 47 professionals representing the 17 Member-States of UNESCO from across the Pacific to share their experiences, learn from one another and to debate the future development of their education sectors.

A wide range of participants attended the conference: PHES, other officials of the ministries of education, researchers, development partners, regional organizations and the United Nations' Organizations. The conference was structured around plenaries and small, facilitated workshops and presentations to allow all participants to enter into practical discussions. With speakers from among the development partners, the meeting provided particularly interesting opportunities to dialogue on education issues and activities.

The meeting is a key activity for UNESCO Office for the Pacific States, both as an established meeting and as an introduction of the proposed Regional Education Framework to a wider network of professionals interested in approaches and direction for the future of education in the Pacific. It also facilitates discussions of the realities of challenges faced and practical solutions proposed by different PHES members hence the meeting transcribes to be a learning platform to share the diverse experiences that each brings to the meeting.

A PHES meeting Report and Outcomes document was produced to capture the discussions had as well as the decisions made by PHES members and participants during the two-day consultation. The continuation of this important regional forum for Education will be hosted by Niue in 2019 at the 23rd Consultation Meeting of the Pacific Heads of Education Systems. The dialogue continues in the Pacific with the sharing of knowledge and learning from each other's experiences.





THE International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) joined its affiliates the Media Association blong Vanuatu (MAV), E Tū (New Zealand) and the Federation of Journalists, New Caledonia (FJC-NC) along with the Papua New Guinea Media Workers Association (PNGMWA), Fiji Media Association (FMA), and Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI), to launch the Pacific Media Network (PMN) at the inaugural Pacific regional meeting in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Alongside the PMN, the IFJ and Media Association blong Vanuatu co-hosted a two-day IFJ Pacific Solidarity & Campaign Workshop: Strong Voices Together. Supported by UNESCO, the workshop focused on strengthening regional and transnational solidarity, advocacy, campaigning and the use of digital and social media tools.

From October 26 – 27 2017, 15 media leaders and activists from Vanuatu, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Fiji were brought together to identify and discuss critical issues facing journalists and organisations operating across the Pacific.

Topics ranged from journalist welfare, safety and protection; handling political influence, management and ownership; sexual harassment and gender inequity in the field and workplace; media rights awareness; development of RTI and Access to Information Laws and the need to support a collective voice for journalists in the region.

A spokesperson at the IFJ said: "It was a great opportunity to create solidarity among our colleagues and launch a network to share experiences, skills and campaigns. We hope that the Pacific Media Network (PMN) will become a key vehicle for journalists to campaign and advocate on shared issues in the Pacific."

The regional workshop was preceded by a two-day union leadership and management workshop with the MAV executive and local journalists. Both activities were co-funded by Union to Union and UNESCO IPDC.

Working towards ICH database for Samoa



ON the 13 of December, a workshop on the ICH database management system development was held at the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESCO Apia Samoa).

The Workshop was attended by eight officials from MESC Culture Division, ICT Unit, Media Unit, Museum Unit and Policy Unit.

The Workshop began with the presentation by Mr Shengru Li, showing the existing ICH information systems of the international and national organizations as examples.

This was followed by Dr Yamaguchi, sharing her experience in managing the heritage database development project in Luang Prabang, World Heritage city in Lao PDR.

Further, a brain storming session took place in order to identify current needs of MESC as a state party to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

First, the participants identified the following three important requirements for the ICH database: 1) store and manage information on the diverse ICH elements in Samoa; 2) allow information sharing within MESC with possibility of its extension to other Ministries and stakeholders from long-term perspective, 3) ensure its sustainability by building a team supported by training.

Second, several challenges were identified, including: 1) curation of information which is currently scattered at different units, 2) systematic organization of information and photos with accurate captions, 3) digitalization of archives that is currently in progress.

Third, the potential benefits of the ICH database were clarified as follows: 1) promote the safeguarding of culture heritage through raising awareness by data sharing and dissemination, 2) promote researches and projects on the ICH contribution to sustainable development, and 3) prevent the loss of data and information on the related researches and policies.

After the brainstorming session, Mr Li continued with the introduction of technology used for ICH database prototyping, the demonstration of the prototype, and discussion on future works.

The workshop concluded with MESC presenting its strong support and commitment to the development of the ICH Database Management System (ICH DBMS) in Samoa.

Office updates

New Staff joining the UNESCO Pacific Office team



Education Programme Specialist – Gail Townsend

With 16 years with the Ministry of Education in the Cook Islands, Gail worked in Curriculum Development before shifting into a policy and planning role over the period of EFA and for the last 2 years has been the Secretary of Education. Gail has also been with the National Commission of UNESCO in the Cook Islands since 2012. Her previous education sector experience was in both Kiribati and New Zealand. Gail has a Masters in Science Education and a Masters in Educational Planning and Management



Young Professional – Yi Shi

Ms. Yi Shi joined our office as a young professional of the UNESCO-China Traineeship Programme. She has a multidisciplinary background in education, health, international relations and communication with a Master Degree in International Development Studies. Her current focus are resource mobilization and communication.



Intern Culture – Shengru Li

Shengru Li joined the UNESCO Pacific Office as an intern for Culture. He came as a postgraduate student from Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan. His current focus is to work with UNESCO Culture Specialist and Samoa Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture experts for initiating an intangible culture heritage database.

Blessings to our UNESCO Pacific Office Family

We congratulate two of our staff members and warmly welcome the new members to our UNESCO Pacific Office Family.



Ms Telesia Faalogo was blessed with a handsome son on the 12 December 2017.



Ms Faalogoifo Niutao was blessed with a beautiful daughter on the 31 August 2017



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The UNESCO Office for the Pacific States based in Apia, Samoa covers 16 independent countries and one territory in the Pacific:

Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

In line with UNESCO's global priorities, the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States sets a local programme of action in consultation with the 17 member states and territories.

UNESCO Member States in black.



