

Pacific Islands Brief

PIDP Pacific Islands Development Program

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A New Strategic Architecture for the Pacific

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The United States' historical relationship with Pacific Island countries most frequently conjures up images of 19th Century Yankee whalers and World War II's island-hopping campaign. Often forgotten is how, in the post-war years, the creation of new intergovernmental organizations and U.S. trusteeship of much of the North Pacific contributed to a stronger regional identity and more active efforts at regional integration. Following a period of relative inactivity in the 1990's, the United States is now refocusing on its political and economic role in the region as a matter of priority. Healthy regional intergovernmental organizations remain essential to the success of U.S. efforts.

Since 2004, high-level United States officials have met periodically with representatives of Pacific Island countries (PICs) at the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders (PICL), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Post-Forum Dialogue, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Forum Fisheries Agency, and the United Nations General Assembly. U.S. efforts began to build momentum with Washington's designation of 2007 as the "Year of the Pacific." This clearly signaled that the United States would step up its engagement in the Pacific. Since then, the frequency of high-level visits have increased with visits by Secretaries of State to Samoa, Papua New Guinea, and most recently the Cook Islands. The United States' re-orienting towards the Asia-Pacific has not overlooked the islands. The expansion of the United States' contemporary presence

in the Pacific began in earnest with the State Department's establishment of new regional defense, environmental, public diplomacy, and labor hubs at our embassy in Suva, Fiji, and the establishment of a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) office in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. The United States Peace Corps already had over 200 volunteers serving in Fiji, Micronesia, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu. The establishment of these regional offices helped to support Peace Corps efforts, supported a dramatic uptick in more senior-level visits and port calls, and led to a deeper focus on maritime security, law enforcement cooperation, trafficking in persons, and labor mobility.

To meet its regional objectives, the United States strengthened relations with Australia and rekindled its partnership with New Zealand, thereby integrating these bilateral relations into a larger multilateral approach that established a more comprehensive, coordinated and coherent framework.

With the completion of the new U.S. Embassy Suva's construction at its new location in 2011, the United States today has the largest diplomatic mission in the Pacific. Embassy Suva is responsible for maintaining diplomatic relations and consular functions with the five countries of Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu. Together with its consular responsibilities for New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna, the embassy's jurisdiction

encompasses 7.57 million square miles and fully reflects the diversity of the challenges and opportunities found throughout Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Embassy Suva's regional offices support U.S. missions in Port Moresby, Kolonia, Majuro, and Koror on public diplomacy, environmental, labor, and security issues spanning the Pacific. The Ambassador in Suva is the U.S. Special Representative to the PIF and chief interlocutor with the SPC.

U.S. priorities in the Pacific are to support and protect democracy and human rights, encourage economic growth and development, foster regional stability, elicit support for U.S. interests outside the region, and build capacity for environmental protection and resource management, as well as climate adaptation. The United States can best build capacity and promote sustainable development by contributing primarily to regional multilateral and international organizations with auxiliary support from federal agencies to help harmonize regional assistance.

Pacific Regional Architecture

The PICs' capacity to implement good governance, economic growth, rule of law, and gender equality, as well as their ability to respond to the challenges of fighting pandemics, preventing and managing diabetes, stemming the flow of illicit drugs, combating human trafficking, and policing against illegal fishing, is often insufficient to meet regional goals, if left to a country by country approach. This underscores a need for multilateral approaches to problem-solving.

Capacity-building is the fundamental aim of U.S. development efforts in the Pacific. The United States seeks to build local capacity, strengthen governance, promote the harmonization of standards, and help Pacific islanders achieve sustainable development throughout the region. Regional multilateral and international organizations are important vehicles for accomplishing these overarching goals.

The United States is a member of some of these organizations and has longstanding relationships with others. Strengthening our coordination with Pacific regional institutions is one of the most constructive and cost-effective steps we should continue to take to ramp up our regional engagement and have a positive impact on the security and prosperity of the Pacific Islands. At the same time, the current regional architecture for the Pacific needs adjustment to meet our collective goals and objectives more efficiently.

In the North Pacific, U.S. assistance to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Palau—known collectively as the Freely Associated States—is governed by treaties known as the Compacts of Free Association (COFA). In the South Pacific, however, the United States could maximize the impact of its contributions by routing them primarily through regional multilateral and international organizations, which also benefit the Pacific as a whole. United States federal agencies should be encouraged to look for new ways to use the work of these organizations to

augment their efforts in the North Pacific. By the same token, these agencies could reach out more to the South Pacific by making greater use of regional bodies, not only to meet their mandates but also to lash up with broader ongoing regional efforts.

The SPC is a key regional partner of the United States in the Pacific. It is the most venerable, vital, and inclusive of the ten organizations in the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP). The United States is a founding member of the SPC and donated towards its main office structures in Noumea, New Caledonia, and in Suva, Fiji. More meaningful, however, is the SPC's importance to the region's architecture. It is a truly pan-Pacific regional organization and, with a staff of 600 as well as a US\$100 million total budget, and continues to be the central mainstay of the region's institutional framework.

The United States contributes about 17 percent of the SPC's core budget of US\$10 million, with additional funding available on a program-by-program basis. Earlier this year a large majority of island members of the SPC agreed to increase their contributions by over 40 percent—a collective vote of confidence in the SPC and a strong statement of appreciation for its constituent services. Canberra, Wellington, and Paris have indicated they will consider an increase in their core funding. Washington ought to do likewise, because with donor assistance, the SPC pools and provides, in a much more cost-effective manner, the critical technical talent

and resources that no one Pacific Island country could possibly replicate and sustain on its own.

During testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment in Washington, D.C. on September 29, 2010, Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell further underscored the SPC's role. He stated:

In addition to working with the PIF, the United States sees opportunities for enhancing the work of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The now 26-member strong SPC is not only the oldest and largest, it is also the premier regional organization in the Pacific; United States Pacific territories, including American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, are full members of its technical agencies. Thus far, three Americans have served as SPC Director General since its inception. Working with the SPC gives the United States the opportunity to standardize climate change policies with the United States territories and the Freely Associated States. SPC is a natural partner to advance United States and regional agendas in climate change adaptation, food security, fisheries, health, and other priority sectors.

The United States collaborates with the SPC on a wide range of issues, including such areas as maritime and port security; the fight against pandemic influenza, non-communicable diseases, as well as other public health threats; fisheries' protection and natural resources management; search and

rescue training; food security; and climate change. Working with the SPC allows U.S. agencies the opportunity to align policies on climate change and key regional issues with the independent states in the Pacific.

The Pacific Islands Forum is another one of the United States' partners. Although it is a sub-regional political institution that does not include the United States or France, the PIF is considered the top political policy-making body and is thus in a strong position to leverage other CROP agencies. Combined with the Post-Forum Dialogues that follow each leadership summit, the PIF has the potential to advance practical, shared objectives with the island nations and its Post-Forum Dialogue partners. Although U.S. membership is not in prospect, identifying ways to enhance donor coordination and work closely with the PIF to rationalize and integrate its leading institutional role, promoting results-oriented decision-making, and generating practical outcomes consistent with U.S. mechanisms for development assistance are simultaneous U.S. priorities for the PIF. Working with the PIF Secretariat, the region's leading institution for policy implementation, gives the United States a framework for collaboration with such entities as the United Nations, the European Union's Africa, Caribbean and Pacific group, as well as the Melanesian Spearhead Group to achieve greater traction on regional issues.

The Situation in Fiji

The United States has a dual-track approach to Suva whereby it maintains congressionally man-

dated sanctions and publicly advocates for democratic governance, while unceasingly working to identify areas for potential cooperation. In close coordination with Australia, New Zealand, the PIF, and other partners, the United States has encouraged Fiji to take steps to return to a leadership role in the Pacific community. The Port Moresby Declaration, which suspended Fiji from the PIF, does not apply to the SPC. Ongoing work with the SPC that is not precluded by U.S. sanctions remains a gateway for Fiji's reintegration into regional frameworks based upon cooperation among democratically elected governments.

U.S. sanctions against Fiji are not Fiji-specific. The U.S. Congress enacted the sanctions, before Fiji's coup, to apply against all military regimes that come to power by overthrowing democratically elected governments. Accordingly, U.S. sanctions target Fiji's military regime, not its people, and will be lifted after the country returns to democracy.

Fiji is central to regional collaboration. As a transportation hub and popular tourist destination, Fiji is especially vulnerable to transnational crime, including drug and human smuggling and trafficking. The United States remains committed to engage with Fiji to help it make needed economic reforms, support the rule of law, and build confidence in its stated commitment to free and fair elections in 2014. The United States and its regional partners will continue to engage with Suva to create favorable conditions for a genuine democratic transition in Fiji.

Working with Key Partners

The Pacific Ocean is not an American lake. The region is of growing international importance and has many friends. Australia and New Zealand, in particular, share the United States' profound commitment to the region. Both countries have strong cultural, political, historical, and security ties to the islands. The United States collaborates closely with these two friends on policies and programs throughout the Pacific to achieve common regional objectives.

The European Union has become a major regional partner as well. France has its Pacific territories. Pitcairn Islands remains a British Overseas Possession, and Britain's monarch remains sovereign in several Pacific countries. France and the United Kingdom maintain active roles in strengthening vulnerable democracies and promoting good governance throughout the Pacific. Japan and South Korea have substantial presences and run important aid programs. Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines are also enlarging their regional footprints. The United Nations' key programs funded through its various agencies are advancing development goals. The Asian Development Bank has also played a significant role in the region's poverty alleviation efforts.

India has a special historical relationship with Fiji, based on the socioeconomic contributions of Fijians of Indian descent who constitute nearly 40 percent of the population and form the core of Fiji's business class. While Mumbai is more distant from Suva than Los Angeles or Shanghai, these historic

ties, and the prominent role of Indo-Fijians—not only in Fiji but also in the Indian diaspora writ-large—heighten the significance of India's growing role in the Pacific region.

China is rapidly expanding ties throughout the Pacific. Beijing has set aside a 10-year US\$375 million low-interest loan fund for Pacific Island countries and established a large new embassy in Suva. Papua New Guinea and Fiji have become regional favorites for Chinese investment and high-profile official visits. China's very different approach to development assistance, which focuses on concessional loans and turnkey “bricks and mortar” construction projects, contrasts with—and, in some ways, complements—the largely grant-driven U.S. approach which emphasizes local capacity-building. China should develop a cooperative approach to development assistance, and disaster preparedness and response in the Pacific. Beijing should begin to show greater accountability and transparency in its assistance programs to ensure that these efforts support good governance and the rule of law.

Working with U.S. Pacific Command

The security challenges in the Pacific are manageable but more efficiently and effectively undertaken through regional collaboration. As Richard Herr and Anthony Bergin stated in their recent East-West Center article titled “Our Near Abroad: Australia and Pacific Islands Regionalism”:

Historically, the success of the regional approach can't be questioned. Regional relation-

ships contributed significantly to the Pacific islands' peaceful transition to independence. Their collective action has been responsible for significant achievements in the postcolonial rough and tumble of resource diplomacy.... today regional security demands more effective collective action to meet the traditional and non-traditional security threats facing the Pacific islands.

The Pacific's security challenges stem primarily from non-traditional threats. We can address these through greater coordination and cooperation on law enforcement and disaster response planning. The United States understands clearly the vulnerabilities of Pacific Islands countries. In recent years, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) Pacific Partnership/Pacific Angel missions have been one of the ways in which we have partnered with our Pacific Island counterparts to meet humanitarian needs throughout the region. These missions have expanded to include partner nations, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations, to better prepare for and respond to cyclones, tsunamis, and other related disasters using multinational medical, dental, veterinary, and engineering outreach programs. In Honolulu, USPACOM sponsors the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE) to assist the PICs with disaster response and training.

USPACOM's Joint Interagency Task Force - West, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) have been central to regional efforts to counter non-traditional threats by

enhancing port security, capacity-building, information-sharing, and maritime domain awareness. Similarly, USPACOM's Joint Task Force – Homeland Defense has conducted numerous exercises throughout the U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands to improve the emergency response skills of military and civil authorities.

The USPACOM-sponsored Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) provides Asia-Pacific and U.S. military and civilian policymakers, academics, and security professionals with executive education and conferences. These enhance their awareness and skills to understand the current maritime security threats in the region and develop tangible steps forward to increase maritime domain awareness and address other issues.

Maritime Security

The absence of coherent regional maritime security architecture leaves a large expanse of the Pacific susceptible to external non-state actors and other non-traditional threats. Increasing maritime security and law enforcement capacity throughout the region is crucial. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is the largest trans-national criminal concern in the Pacific. In order to more effectively defend vast fishing areas that are vulnerable to illegal commercial exploitation, the patrol fleets Australia generously donated to the PICs' maritime security programs should be augmented by air assets. The Australia-New Zealand-France-United States "quad" is committed to growing PICs' capacity to preserve and protect their resources. APCSS also provides Asia-Pacific and

U.S. military and civilian policymakers, academics, and security professionals with executive education and conferences to not only increase maritime domain awareness, but also address other pertinent issues.

The United States has significantly expanded cooperative maritime enforcement through bilateral "shiprider" agreements. These agreements allow Pacific Island governments' law enforcement officers to embark aboard select Coast Guard vessels and aircraft transiting their waters or airspace. The purpose of this arrangement is to amplify the PICs' ability to conduct surveillance and enforcement activities within their own maritime jurisdictions through joint operations. This program effectively enables them to interdict suspicious vessels operating inside their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). The value of such efforts can be found not only in environmental management of depleting fish stocks but also in decision-making, good governance, and deterrence, as they also tend to foreclose opportunities for corrupt practices targeting vulnerable legislators or law enforcement officers. They have quickly proven successful, with early interdictions netting unexpected windfalls in fines from IUU fishing and increases in applications for licenses to fish within EEZs for some participating island governments. Accordingly, more PICs are actively investigating expansion possibilities. With SPC sponsorship, the USCG has also conducted Search and Rescue (SAR) conferences, which are of growing importance in view of the increase in large cruise ships in the Pacific.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is another federal agency that works closely with the SPC in order to accomplish its regional mission. Its Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center maintains close ties with the SPC's Oceanic Fisheries Program, the Pacific Community's regional center for tuna fishery research, monitoring, stock assessment, and data management. NOAA's Pacific Tsunami Warning Center also provides the PICs with vital early tsunami alerts.

The United States is also strengthening cooperation to stem the trafficking of persons, arms, and illicit narcotics. Embassy Suva's Regional Security Office has engaged the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Agency, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as the Transportation Security Administration in regional law enforcement efforts through multilateral mechanisms.

Environmental Safeguards and Climate Change

Other donor countries should join with the United States in supporting the efforts of international organizations to meet regional climate change goals through better coordinated and more coherent approaches. The United States is committed to meeting the world's serious climate and clean energy challenges. The Copenhagen Accord, the Cancun Agreements, and the Durban Platform take meaningful steps towards addressing climate change. Partner states are firmly committed to boosting climate financing to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific and worldwide as well as work-

ing with them to catalyze and develop robust, comprehensive, and sustainable approaches to climate change adaptation, with an emphasis on renewable energy resources. Subject to congressional approval, the U.S. Government will provide US\$100 million to help vulnerable SIDS withstand the impacts of climate change with more than US\$21 million targeted specifically for the Pacific Island countries.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is diversifying its development portfolio in the Pacific with new programs focused on health, environment, and climate change. In conjunction with its Regional Environmental Office (REO) at Embassy Suva and alongside our Pacific partners, USAID will provide valuable additional technical sources. The PICs often do not have the ability to absorb, manage, and dispense significant funding, and are often overwhelmed by the procedures required to apply for funding from dedicated multilateral climate change and environmental funds. USAID and REO's efforts to strengthen existing regional donor coordination could help close gaps, prevent redundancies, and share best practices. USAID's return to the Pacific is a critical step towards more comprehensive aid coordination. Its Pacific Regional office will manage disaster assistance programs for the Marshall Islands and Micronesia, an ongoing HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment program in Papua New Guinea, as well as regional environment and climate change programs, such as the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI). USAID and the Department of State jointly fund the United States CTI Support Program to build capacity and provide technical assistance to participating coun-

tries with sustaining fisheries, managing marine sanctuaries, and adapting to climate change.

The United States is expanding initiatives that promote low emissions and energy-efficient technologies. The United States also supports adaptation efforts that strengthen technical and vocational education, expand training programs, and employ environmentally sustainable technologies. For example, USAID is working with the University of the South Pacific to set up a pilot program in solar array maintenance. This approach would increase Pacific Islanders' labor mobility and remittances, in turn addressing the core concern that islands may become uninhabitable due to sea-level encroachment. The United States should also provide appropriate technologies to improve the resilience of tenuous island economies in the earthquake-, tsunami-, and cyclone-prone Pacific region, thus increasing energy, food, and economic security.

Empowering Women

These are but a few of the ways in which the United States has increased its engagement in the Pacific in recent years. The more we use frameworks built upon transcendent goals and principles through multilateral cooperation rather than individual, *ad hoc* country-specific programs, the more we increase program efficiencies and the effectiveness of donor coordination. For example, a key goal of the United States is to promote women's participation in political and socioeconomic decision-making. The Pacific Women's Empowerment Initiative and its centerpiece, the Rarotonga Partnership for Advancement of Women, will take a multilateral

approach to promote the inclusion of women in government, regional organizations, and private enterprise, will secure improvements in governance and economic growth.

A Special Role in the Pacific: America's East-West Center

The East-West Center is the United States' most consistently engaged and active regional organization generally involved with the island world and its leadership. The Center's Hawaii base gives it a natural interest and special advantage in working within Oceania.

The Center's assets include its stewardship of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders (PICL) a recognized, head of government-level 30-year-old international organization, the Pacific Islands Development Program (with a work program guided by the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders), the Pacific region's most prominent on-line news service (with more than 2000 readers daily), and an influential alumni base in national governments, academic institutions, and regional organizations. The Center has also been a devoted advocate for more consistent U.S. government attention to the region (particularly the South Pacific) and has arranged each of the three meetings involving a U.S. president and the island leaders as a group. In recent years, the Center has become the "go-to" place for the US-sponsored election observation missions in the island region. It is a source of expertise on the region and is widely viewed in Oceania and East Asia as one of the premier institutions working on Pacific islands issues.

Although the Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) has a small staff, the program leverages other resources within and outside the Center for assistance. For example, several of the EWC research and education personnel have professional expertise in the islands, and a major research project involves climate change in the island region. The Center also has a long and close relationship with Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai'i and a growing relationship with colleagues working on the islands region in the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies.

The EWC has for over 50 years played a unique and important public diplomacy role in advancing U.S.-Pacific Island relations, as well as assisting the island nations with their broader engagement with other nations in the Asia-Pacific community and the world. Aside from the new "Rarotonga Partnership" leadership programs for the Pacific islands mentioned above, PIDP is working on its first "State of the Region" report, following a successful meeting in 2011 with the same title. It is intended that this be a regular review of the Island world.

Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century

The nations of the Pacific look to the United States to do more to support and protect democracy and human rights, encourage economic growth, foster regional stability, garner support for our security agenda outside the region, and build environmental protection as well as resource management capacities. To achieve this, Washington must do more to improve the institutional reach and capacity of the existing regional multilateral and intergovernmental

organizational structures by giving them more U.S. support and by encouraging more active participation by other development partners.

The United States should more visibly demonstrate its commitment to the SPC to island members, both in terms of providing the SPC with additional project funding and through contributions to its core resources, which the SPC uses to improve direct service delivery throughout the region. Concurrently, the United States should utilize the SPC as an effective mechanism for promoting research and technical and scientific policy dialogue and development. Although the United States has increased its level of involvement in the SPC since 2008, current support is well short of its historic levels. As a founding member of the SPC, Washington should demonstrate greater and sustained interest by undertaking new initiatives with the Pacific Community.

The United States should work with the SPC to develop a regional program for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) that would focus on reducing the region's energy costs, carbon footprint, and reliance on fossil fuel importation. The Tonga Energy Roadmap makes a compelling case for how clean energy technologies might be implemented at a scale appropriate for small islands. At the same time, the MCC could play an important role in upgrading the region's existing electric grid and infrastructure in order to help the PICs optimize energy efficiency.

The United States and partner countries should continue to use the SPC governing council as a

mechanism to discuss ways to ensure parallel funding of common approaches to assistance to the Pacific, particularly regarding trade, environmental protection, and disaster response.

Washington should facilitate the agreement between Guam's Department of Labor and the SPC to connect skilled Pacific workers with potential employers who are involved in the impending U.S. military buildup on Guam and use the Australia-Pacific Technical College, unions, colleges and trade schools to better promote labor mobility and consequently close the region's vocational education and training gaps.

The Department of the Interior and the SPC should harmonize regional standards and coordinate better service delivery to the Freely Associated States. To ensure their effectiveness and long-lasting impact, USAID initiatives will also require integrated planning alongside USPACOM, the USCG, the Department of the Interior, NOAA, and other federal agencies, and close collaboration with the SPC and other CROP organizations.

Budget-permitting, the Peace Corps should resume operation in Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Tuvalu. Until then, it should consider assigning veteran volunteers to the SPC and other CROP agencies to augment their staff with trained personnel and increase our mutual understanding. Other U.S. technical agencies such as NOAA and the U.S. Geologic Survey should also consider secondment as a means of strengthening the SPC and advancing both Pacific and United States priorities in specific sectors.

The United States should endorse the establishment of a Pacific Private Sector Advisory Board within the SPC to promote shared economic interest in increased commerce, fairer trade practices, tourism, consumer protection, new public-private partnerships, more technical assistance, as well as access to project financing.

Helping Pacific Island countries see themselves as connected by ocean rather than separated by water is best achieved through robust engagement and support for Pacific regional organizations. A strategic use of the region's intergovernmental architecture is necessary if the countries of the Pacific are to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Ambassador C. Steven McGann

C. Steven McGann is Vice Chancellor of the College of International Security Affairs (CISA) at National Defense University in Washington, D.C. His responsibilities at CISA include strengthening global partnerships to enhance strategic cooperation on counter-terrorism initiatives, developing a “Women, Peace, & Security” curriculum, and teaching an elective on “Security, Strategy and Small States.” Prior to this assignment, he was the U.S. Ambassador to the Republics of Fiji, Nauru, Kiribati, and the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu (2008-11). During his tenure, U.S. Secretary of State Clinton designated him as the first U.S. Representative to the Pacific Islands Forum. He also served as the United States' principal interlocutor with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). His achievements centered on democracy-building, law enforcement cooperation, maritime security, humanitarian assistance, disaster response, fisheries protection, and climate change. Ambassador McGann oversaw the largest expansion of United States diplomatic presence in the Pacific with the creation of Embassy Suva as a regional hub post and the construction of a \$60 million new embassy chancery compound in Fiji.

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PIDP Pacific Islands Development Program

The Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) was established in 1980 as the research and training arm for the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders—a forum through which heads of government discuss critical policy issues with a wide range of interested countries, donors, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector representatives. PIDP activities are designed to assist Pacific Island leaders in advancing their collective efforts to achieve and sustain equitable social and economic development. In support of the East-West Center's mission, the PIDP serves as a catalyst for development and a link connecting the Pacific, the United States, and other regions.

The *Pacific Islands Brief* series seeks to stimulate discussion by providing concise overviews of contemporary issues in the Pacific Islands region. It is available exclusively in electronic format. The views expressed in this series are solely those of the authors and not of any organization with which they are affiliated, nor do they reflect the policy or position of PIDP or the East-West Center.



The East-West Center promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue. Established by the US Congress in 1960, the Center serves as a resource for information and analysis on critical issues of common concern, bringing people together to exchange views, build expertise, and develop policy options.

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