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Paper 1
ORIGINAL: FRENCH**TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**
(27 July 2017, Noumea, New Caledonia)**AGENDA ITEM No. 2: THEMATIC DISCUSSION:**
INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

Purpose

1. This paper is designed to set the scene for the dialogue session between the leaders and representatives of the Pacific Community's member countries and territories and specially invited participants on the topic of *Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development*.

Background

2. Discussion at the 10th Conference of the Pacific Community (SPC) will be coupled with celebrations for this intergovernmental organisation's 70th anniversary: the oldest in the Pacific region and one of the oldest international organisations still operating today.
3. Since 1947 and throughout its history and development, SPC has understood the importance of partnerships; in the beginning was a partnership between the founding member states¹ to create an international development organisation designed to promote *'the economic and social welfare and advancement of the peoples [...] in the South Pacific region.'*² In 1983, at the 23rd South Pacific Conference on Saipan, a truly innovative partnership and a striking example of inclusive regionalism allowed all the Pacific Island countries and territories, whether they were sovereign countries or territories of a metropolitan power, to be accepted as members of SPC. In 1997, at the 37th and final South Pacific Conference, a clear partnership was struck between all of SPC's members to recognise changes in the organisation as well as its mission to support all the countries and territories throughout the Pacific, and not only those in the South Pacific, which resulted in the South Pacific Commission becoming the Pacific Community.
4. Today, more than ever, partnerships remain vital for developing and implementing successful and effective sustainable development programmes. The S.A.M.O.A. Pathway, 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) all give a leading role to partnerships for achieving the SDGs and fulfilling communities' aspirations. Indeed, SDG no. 17 does make the accomplishment of those objectives dependent on the creation of *'effective partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society... inclusive (partnerships)'*, while making *'peoples and the*

¹ Australia, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America

² Excerpt of the recitals from the Agreement that created the South Pacific Commission, signed in Canberra on 6 February 1947.

planet' central to the goals. Since 2015, the international community has laid special emphasis on both the involvement of all the parties and the impact of their commitments, as recognised in the Paris Climate Change Agreement's Agenda of Solutions and in the Voluntary Commitment Registry of the first international Ocean Conference. This creates a virtuous chain of development stakeholders.

5. In a recent statement, the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, emphasised that the 'multipolar world' needed multilateral cooperation to face common threats and seize shared opportunities:

*'For the first time in human history, the world has at its disposal sufficient resources and advanced technologies to end extreme poverty, to reduce inequalities and to place the planet on a sustainable trajectory.'*³

6. The Secretary-General spoke on this topic once more in Davos during the World Economic Forum's special session on 'Cooperation for Peace':

'...in the context of the perspective of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change,' what is needed is *'a new generation of partnerships, partnerships not only with governments, not only with civil society and academia but equally partnerships with the business community, [so as to create] the conditions for an inclusive and sustainable development – the best way to prevent crises and conflicts in today's world.'*⁴

7. As Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Helen Clark recalled the importance *'of national ownership, a strong results focus, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and accountability in maximizing the impact of development co-operation.'*⁵

8. The Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 states:

SPC will continue to broker partnerships between members to facilitate intra-regional collaboration and sharing of skills in key areas. SPC will also strengthen existing partnerships, including with CROP agencies, build new relationships, and contribute to strengthening regional mechanisms to address development challenges.

9. For SPC, the expected result is 'strong engagement by members in SPC's programmes and closer collaboration between SPC and its partners, which enhances the relevance and effectiveness of SPC's work.'⁶

10. Today's partnerships, those of that new generation highlighted by the UN Secretary General, must consequently be inclusive and welcome all development stakeholders, whether they be governments, the private sector, civil society, communities, or intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations. It also appears important for such partnerships to be founded on

³ Speech by the UN Secretary General, 'Belt and Road' Forum, Beijing, China, 14 May 2017.

⁴ Speech by the UN Secretary General, World Economic Forum, special session on 'Cooperation for Peace', Davos, Switzerland, 17-20 January 2017.

⁵ Helen Clark's statement to the First Regular Session of the UNDP Executive Board, 30 January 2017. The quote refers to the conclusions of the participants at the Second High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) that took place in Nairobi, Kenya from 28 November to 1 December 2016.

⁶ Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016-2020, p. 7.

common principles and values and a unified vision linked to shared goals that place peoples and their environments at the centre of the process.

Challenges

11. One of the challenges of these new partnerships will clearly be the issue of capacity to coordinate and integrate the action of many different partners united around a single set of objectives and activities. Added to that is the difficulty, as often experienced with international and regional (and sometimes even national) partnerships, in placing communities at the core of arrangements which are often largely institutional. The challenge is therefore to successfully implement strong institutional partnerships between a wide range of partners, thereby establishing a continuum of participation and ownership from the intergovernmental or governmental level to the community level.
12. Another major challenge is to give meaning to the concept of innovation within such partnerships. A lot has been written and said about 'innovative partnerships', but in reality it is often difficult to describe precisely what it is that is innovative in one partnership or another.

Characterising and leveraging innovative partnerships

13. An innovative partnership is notable for its inclusiveness, particularly its openness to the private sector. Removing barriers and forming alliances between 'improbable' allies from the very outset of a partnership by offering balanced participation to partners guarantees both equity and vitality.
14. Such partnerships must be based on dialogue, new ideas and transparency. They should adopt audacious approaches and break down traditional barriers in connection with the groups of stakeholders involved and the themes chosen. A common long-term vision needs to be developed to overcome divergences and to serve the general interest. Identifying a common objective, such as achieving the SDGs, expressing outcomes in terms of their expected transformative results, and measuring impact ensure a partnership's accountability and effectiveness.
15. The means for creating such partnerships include, in particular, sharing a common geographical area, similar or complementary skills, openness, a desire for mutual enrichment and a meeting of cultures, and, most importantly, similar values. Time should be taken for discussions to create and nurture each partnership so as to develop a common language together.
16. Formalising partnerships helps guarantee their results, performance and professionalism. This can take several forms, including sponsorships, responsible practices and economic cooperation.
17. Specific mention could also be made of innovative financing. With a view towards bridging the funding gap for public development or infrastructure projects, such financing consists of mechanisms that generate new resources for development to supplement traditional public assistance. It can, for example, take the form of taxes on financial transactions or debt conversion.
18. The question is, then, to determine how we, the countries and territories of the Pacific region, Pacific development partners, and international and regional organisations, can fully integrate innovation into partnerships to improve their scope, effectiveness and, most importantly, their sustainable development outcomes.

Innovative partnership proposal for the Pacific

19. The purpose of this paper is not to put forward a comprehensive list of innovative partnership proposals. Rather, it presents some new ideas and existing partnerships that are platforms that combine the concepts of partnership and innovation to promote sustainable development.
20. On 2 June 2017, the Pacific Community signed a partnership agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). For the first time, this new partnership will institutionalise technical cooperation between these two organisations, whose shared goal is to draw on and promote science, technology, innovation and technical expertise for the benefit both of sustainable development and the communities in their respective member countries. Whether it involves marine environment conservation and management, public health, climate change adaptation or agriculture, the SPC-IAEA partnership opens many cooperation avenues where combining isotope science and techniques with conventional science and techniques could produce even more reliable data and even more relevant outcomes. For example, the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT), hosted by SPC, has developed a taro variety that grows in highly saline soils. It can easily be imagined that, through the techniques used in IAEA laboratories in Seibersdorf, Austria, this same variety could also be made more drought resistant or have its yield increased. This partnership therefore facilitates the interface between science and innovation for sustainable development.
21. A new initiative, which SPC is currently developing, is the Pacific Hub for Learning and Innovation. This hub is designed as a partnership between Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) organisations and a number of member countries or other development stakeholders⁷ to add impetus to the search for innovative solutions to the region's challenges and improve decision-making based on scientifically proven data. For example, in terms of how the hub might operate, a specific development challenge would periodically be chosen as the 'study topic'. Key people – experts in the area – would then be identified from among the partners and brought together to share their viewpoints and ideas, with a view to identifying two or three collaborative pilot projects using new approaches to overcome that challenge. Depending on the outcomes of each project, they could be further developed and improved with a view to implementing them beyond the pilot sites. Such a hub could thus lead to partnerships specially designed to target specific development challenges, and opportunities for collaboration in the Pacific region could be identified.
22. The internal prioritisation process that SPC has been engaged in over the past two years has also yielded an idea for an innovative partnership in an area that is both a current issue in 2017 and an essential element of sustainable development in the Pacific. This concept is the establishment of a Pacific Centre for Ocean Science. Hosted at SPC, this centre would become a true flagship for scientific excellence and a dedicated Pacific platform bringing together international expertise in topics related to marine science, fisheries, governance and maritime transport, climate change, risk and disaster preparedness, and the sustainable management of the ocean and its resources. The purpose of this multi-sector and multi-stakeholder collaboration would be to protect the ocean and its resources through leading-edge scientific research, innovative technologies and substantial cooperation activities based on input from the first two areas. The centre would be a dynamic and living example of an integrated approach, not only within SPC but also between SPC and its partners, to the many different challenges inherent to the oceans, and would be an innovative scientific and technical sustainable-development partnership.

⁷ E.g. the Australian Government's Innovation Exchange, the Global Innovation Fund, USAID's Learning Lab.

23. Plans could be made to establish a 'Pacific Futures Partnership', clearly oriented towards our region's future and designed to bring partners together to plan for 20 years or more from now, so as to formulate a common vision of our shared objective for our development. This group could deal with issues such as tertiary health care, higher education, work force mobility and other areas that require a long-term vision (and investments). If SPC's members are interested in this idea, Conference could mandate the Secretariat to establish a group of eminent persons from the region (or even beyond) to develop the partnership, focusing on a long-term vision, which would contribute to the current generation's 'visionary' heritage for future generations.
24. Many international development assistance funds have come into being over the past few years for our benefit. However, it has to be said that such funds, whose objectives are very commendable, often suffer from heavy administrative procedures that make it nearly impossible for our Pacific Island countries to gain access to the funding they need. Our proposal is therefore that a fund be created in the Pacific for the Pacific – the 'Pacific Resilience Fund'. The objective the Secretariat suggests for this fund is to form a partnership around the concept of resilience. Innovative projects designed to increase our Pacific communities' and peoples' resilience would be eligible for support from this fund. Hosted by SPC, the fund would be administered by a council made up of the participating partners, and established on the basis of procedures that provide all the necessary safeguards. Its watchword would be to ensure access to funding under conditions that are suitable for the capacities of Pacific Island countries and territories, along with the requirement to respond appropriately to their needs. Above and beyond Conference's approval, creating such a fund will, of course, require considerable efforts in terms of resource mobilisation, as well as proactive partners to take part in it and supply funding.

Conclusion

25. In the light of the Pacific Island development context, and the challenges for our countries and territories, and, above all, their peoples, it seems essential to redefine the concept of innovative partnerships for sustainable development.
26. If, together, we want to meet the multiple challenges facing our region, we will need to mobilise existing resources, identify additional means, unite good intentions, give greater visibility for development issues in the Pacific, attract new partners and work to make our action even more effective to ensure greater impact and accelerated progress in achieving development objectives at the national, regional and international levels.
27. This paper is designed to present a framework, along with some proposals on innovative sustainable development partnerships, to stimulate discussion between the leaders and representatives of SPC's members and partners attending the 10th Pacific Community Conference.
28. It also aims to seek guidance from Conference that will allow SPC, which is celebrating 70 years of service to development in the Pacific region, to continue to be relevant as a regional development community and, over the years and decades to come, to form and consolidate collaborative partnerships in synergy with the basic premises behind our Pacific Community: science, knowledge and innovation.

Recommendations

29. Conference is invited to:
- i. discuss the theme of 'Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development';
 - ii. consider the proposed partnerships set out in this paper, as well as those that may arise from discussions on that theme;
 - iii. affirm that the Secretariat should continue to build, develop and strengthen partnerships with its members, development partners and any other organisation or agency that wants to work constructively and in keeping with SPC's values for the benefit of the peoples of the Pacific region;
 - iv. adopt the Pacific Community 70th Anniversary Declaration, annexed to this paper.