



GOVERNMENT OF NIUE

# A Safer, More Resilient Niue to Impacts of Climate Change and Towards Achieving Sustainable Livelihood

September 2009

## NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY





# Foreward

While it is anticipated that most nations will ultimately suffer the adverse consequences from climate change, Niue remains one of the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and as such faces the most dire and immediate consequences.

Niue's climate change policy is in recognition of the reality that climate change affects all sectors and directly impacts on the livelihoods of its people.

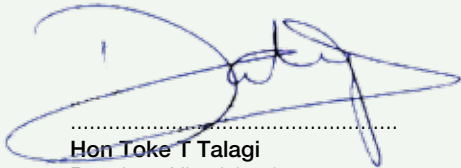
The central purpose of this policy is to offer a more coherent and whole-of-government approach to adapting to the effects and mitigating the causes of climate change.

The policy outlines Niue's broad objectives and strategies for responding to the impacts and challenges of climate change. It is closely linked to the Niue National Strategic Plan (2009-2013) which highlights the need to address the effects of climate change.

The Policy is intended to promote links with, but in no way supersedes national instruments and plans across specific sectors.

The policy should greatly assist government's efforts to access and leverage resources that will assist the people of Niue to formulate and implement appropriate responses to increase their resilience to the effects of climate change and contribute to local and national mitigation efforts.

Niue's climate change policy is also a response to the commitments made by Niue to international instruments such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and regional strategies such as the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework.



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**Hon Toke T Talagi**  
Premier – Niue Island





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# NIUE POLICY STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE



## Title of policy

Niue National Climate Change Policy.

## Purpose of policy

This policy statement outlines Niue's broad objectives and strategies for responding to the impacts and challenges of climate change. It provides a national policy framework to mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its impacts in a coordinated, effective and sustainable manner. It provides the policy platform upon which Niue can engage with and obtain the support of the international community and development partners to address the challenges of climate change in Niue.

## Rationale for policy

Niue is subject to extreme climate events such as cyclones and droughts. Cyclones are a major weather concerns: Tropical cyclone Heta in 2004 caused major damage to infrastructure and agriculture estimated at NZ\$37.7 million, which is close to three times the value of Niue's GDP, highlighting Niue's economic vulnerability to climate change. Climate change has become a cross-sectoral issue that affects all sectors of the economy and at all levels.

A climate change policy is therefore needed to help government make informed decisions on the economy, livelihoods, infrastructure, environment and natural resources that aim to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and climate variability that directly threaten the viability of Niue's small and fragile island. Having a climate change policy will also ensure that appropriate policy response measures are developed and implemented in all sectors so as to enhance the resilience and adaptive capacity of the economy to cope with climate change impacts.

The climate change policy for Niue will serve to define the position of government and other stakeholders on the issues of climate change, variability and sea level rise. It will also define the direction or way forward and the various responsibilities of each stakeholder in the short and long term. The policy will also help guide government in reprioritising government expenditures to meet the resource requirements for implementing climate change adaptation or mitigation strategies envisioned.

There are broad guiding principles implicit in this Policy and that are cross-sectoral and which need to be integrated into the design of any adaptation or mitigation initiatives. These include engagement of relevant stakeholders, issues of food security and internal population relocation.





Detailed statement of the policy

## VISION

A safer, more resilient Niue to impacts of climate change and towards achieving sustainable livelihoods.



Detailed statement of the policy

## GOAL

To promote understanding of and formulate appropriate responses to the causes and effects of climate change in support of national sustainable development objectives.



Detailed statement of the policy

## OBJECTIVES

To attain the above goal the following objectives have been identified along with the associated strategies:

# 1

## AWARENESS RAISING



To promote public awareness and improve stakeholder understanding of the causes and effects of climate change and climate variability and as well as on vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation responses

- 1.1 Develop and implement a climate change communications strategy
- 1.2 Strengthen and coordinate public awareness campaigns through educational and promotional programs such as public seminars, workshops and training, including through the use of multi-media
- 1.3 Develop national partnerships with NGOs and the private sector to raise awareness and target special interest groups such as community bodies, village councils, youth and business community
- 1.4 Incorporate climate change advocacy into school curriculum, as appropriate
- 1.5 Facilitate effective coordination and dissemination of special climate change promotional resources and programs for better understanding of concepts such as adaptation, mitigation, REDD, carbon trading, CDM, green growth, IWRM, PACC



# 2

## DATA COLLECTION, STORAGE, SHARING AND APPLICATION



To improve and strengthen the collection, storage, management and application of climate data, including greenhouse gases and emissions, to monitor climate change patterns and its effects.

- 2.1 Review existing data collection and storage, including options for consolidating different types and sources of data and applications thereof, and develop an integrated approach for data management
- 2.2 This integrated information management system needs to ensure national ownership of the data (e.g. NOAA sea level rise data)
- 2.3 Strengthen and develop local technical capacity to effectively manage climate related data
- 2.4 Analyse and apply climate change information in such a way that is useful and relevant for informed policy and decision-making for all end users at all levels
- 2.5 Facilitate dissemination of findings of scientific research and analysis such as those of IPCC to relevant stakeholders

# 3

## ADAPTATION



To develop effective adaptation responses and enhance adaptive capacity in order to protect livelihoods, natural resources and assets, and vulnerable areas to the impacts of climate change to all sectors.

- 3.1 Identify vulnerable areas and sectors and develop and implement adaptation options that are appropriate and cost-effective to reduce vulnerabilities. These sectors include water, energy, infrastructure, tourism, natural ecosystems, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and health
- 3.3 Enhance local capacity to undertake technical vulnerability, adaptation assessments and undertake cost-benefit analysis of various adaptation options
- 3.3 Identify and promote use of appropriate technology transfer to support adaptation measures
- 3.4 Identify and promote use of traditional knowledge and practices, as appropriate, in design of adaptation initiatives
- 3.5 Strengthen national disaster preparedness and disaster management plans

# 4

## MITIGATION





To mitigate the causes of climate change and implement effective mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- 4.1 Identify, develop and implement viable renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind energy and other alternative energy sources
- 4.2 Promote mitigation actions and energy efficiency measures in sectors such as electricity, buildings, transportation, industry, agriculture, forestry
- 4.3 Identify and promote use of appropriate technology transfer to support mitigation actions and energy efficiency measures
- 4.4 Build local capacity to monitor and update national GHG emissions and inventories

# 5

## GOVERNANCE AND MAINSTREAMING



- i) To mainstream climate change issues into national development; and
  - ii) establish an effective regulatory and institutional framework to facilitate the development and implementation of national responses to climate change
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- 5.1 Integrate climate change considerations in national development initiatives, national and sector plans and strategies
  - 5.2 Ensure climate change concerns and initiatives are appropriately reflected in financial resource allocation processes
  - 5.3 Ensure all relevant stakeholders including local communities, NGOs and private sector participate in development and implementation of climate change-related initiatives
  - 5.4 Establish, institutionalize and resource a national climate change unit to coordinate and monitor climate change activities and implementation of this Policy
  - 5.5 Strengthen and streamline the coordination of climate activities through establishing a climate change steering committee with clear functional linkages to various agencies and stakeholder groups
  - 5.6 Review relevant legislation, regulations, standards and practices so as to identify gaps and strengthen responses to climate change concerns across all sectors
  - 5.7 Review other sector and thematic area plans and policies to align them with this climate change policy, as appropriate

# 6

## REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



To ensure Niue obtains maximum benefits from relevant international and regional instruments relating to climate change and that it meets its commitments under them.

- 6.1 Ensure effective implementation of various instruments pertaining to climate change that Niue is a party to, including UNFCCC and Kyoto and Montreal Protocols
- 6.2 Collaborate with international and regional development partners to strengthen institutional and personnel capacity to support implementation of Niue commitments under these instruments
- 6.3 Enhance local capacity to access external funding mechanisms (such as GEF and EDF) related to these instruments and as well as strengthening capacity to manage and implement those program initiatives
- 6.4 Strengthen local capacity to effectively represent Niue's interests in international climate change negotiations and fora including UNFCCC



## Expected benefits from the policy

It is expected that when implemented this policy will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through:

- Improved public awareness and stakeholder knowledge of climate change issues, leading to better and informed decision-making
- Sound and reliable information available for environmental planning and assessment
- Strengthened national capacity to respond to climate change
- Targeted action on climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Enhanced international cooperation and partnerships on climate change initiatives

## Relationship to the Niue National Strategic Plan 2009 – 2013 and PIFACC

The NSP 2009-2013 highlights priority environmental concerns including the need to address the effects of climate change. This policy provides the linkages between climate change and sustainable development at the national level through improved planning and assessment and the effective implementation of priority adaptation and mitigation initiatives. The policy is also a response to the commitments made by Niue to international instruments such as UNFCCC and regional strategies such as PIFACC. The Framework is intended to promote links with, but in no way supersedes more specific regional and national instruments and plans across specific sectors that link to weather and climate including water; agriculture; energy; forestry and land use; health; coastal zone management; marine ecosystems; ocean management; tourism and transport.

## National Action Plan for implementing the Policy

A more detailed National Action Plan will be developed subsequent to the endorsement of the Policy that outlines in more detail a fully-costed program of initiatives and projects that will need to be developed and implemented in order to achieve the Policy objectives and strategies.

## Institutional arrangements – Planning, Coordination and Management

In order to effectively plan, coordinate and manage implementation of this Policy and avoid potential for overlapping roles and duplication of efforts among various agencies, Government must establish and maintain the capacity to plan, implement and monitor climate change policies and programs in a coordinated manner.

This will require an appropriately staffed and resourced national climate change office or unit. This office could start up with one or two dedicated staff either located within an existing key department or an entirely new office/department with clear functional linkages to other departments and relevant stakeholder groups. The terms of reference for climate change office or unit are to:

- Ensure the Policy is implemented and undertake regular reviews and initiates actions to progress implementation of the Policy
- Ensure that relevant departments and stakeholders understand their roles in implementing the Policy
- Conduct public awareness of the Policy and on the importance of climate change issues generally
- Act as the focal point and liaison for coordinating climate change-related initiatives

- Facilitate capacity building and training initiatives related to climate change
- Coordinate, collate and document all information relating to external sources of funding and assistance to Niue on climate change and disseminate it to relevant stakeholders

Addressing the issues of climate change requires an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach. The success of this Policy will depend to a large extent on the involvement and support of relevant stakeholders. In this regard, and to support coordination of climate change activities at the national level, a steering committee will be set up to provide overall policy direction and guidance on climate change issues affecting Niue. The steering committee will be an inter-departmental body comprising key heads of department such as environment, public works, MET, planning, treasury, health, agriculture, community affairs, external affairs as well as private sector and NGOs. The steering committee could either be a new body or designation of an existing committee with some adjustments to its TOR and membership. The steering committee will need to be institutionalized into the government's decision-making machinery if it is to be effective.

## Monitoring and evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to assess progress of implementation as part of the annual budgetary review process, so that the review outcomes can feed into the annual budgetary process, as appropriate. Results from the annual reviews can also be used towards reporting to regional processes such as the Pacific Plan and international processes such as national communications (UNFCCC). An independent evaluation shall be conducted every five years that shall coincide with the National Strategic Plan review process.



# GLOSSARY



**Adaptation:** the degree to which adjustments are possible in practices, processes, structures or systems in response to projected or actual changes in climate. Adaptation activities contribute to addressing the effects of climate change on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, hydrology and water resources management, agriculture and forestry, human infrastructure, and human health.

**Carbon dioxide:** a naturally occurring gas but also a product of burning fossil fuels and biomass, as well as land-use changes and other industrial processes. It is the principal anthropogenic gas that affects the earth's temperature.

**Clean Development Mechanism (CDM):** is an arrangement under the Kyoto Protocol allowing industrialized countries with a greenhouse gas reduction commitment (called Annex A countries) to invest in projects that reduce emissions in developing countries as an alternative to more expensive emission reductions in their own countries.

**Carbon Trading:** is a market based mechanism for helping mitigate the increase of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. Carbon trading markets bring buyers and sellers of carbon credits together with standardized rules of trade.

**Climate Change:** refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activities (IPCC definition). This usage differs from that in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), where climate change refers to a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and that is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

**Global Environment Facility (GEF):** an independent financial organization that provides grants to developing countries for projects that benefit the global environment and promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities.

**Greenhouse Effect:** a term used to describe the roles of water vapor, carbon dioxide, and other greenhouse gases in keeping the Earth's surface warmer than it would be in their absence. These gases allow shorter wavelengths of solar radiation to enter the atmosphere, but slow the escape of longer wavelength energy radiating from the Earth's surface.

**Greenhouse gases (GHGs):** can be defined as those gases which are relatively minor gaseous constituents of the atmosphere which, nevertheless, have a major effect on the Earth's radiative heat balance, therefore contributing to the greenhouse effect. They include: carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) and the chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Water vapor is also a major greenhouse gas.

**Global Warming:** is the increase in the average temperature of the Earth's near-surface air and oceans since the mid-20th century and its projected continuation. The earth's temperature is being increased, in part, due to emissions of GHGs associated with human activities, such as burning fossil fuels, biomass burning, cement manufacture, cow and sheep rearing, deforestation and other land-use changes.

**International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):** is an advisory gathering of climate scientists to the United Nations. The IPCC was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Environment Programme. It conducts rigorous surveys of the world wide technical and scientific literature and publishes assessment reports that are widely recognized as the most credible existing sources of information on climate change.

**Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM):** is a GEF funded integrated water project implemented in Niue by UNDP and UNEP in collaboration with SOPAC.

**Kyoto Protocol (KP):** is a protocol to the UNFCCC that establishes legally binding commitment for the reduction of four greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride) and two groups of gases hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons produced by developed countries.

**Mitigation:** involves taking action to reduce emissions of GHGs to slow the projected rate of anthropogenically induced climate.

**Niue National Strategic Plan (NNSP):** in this plan, Niue outlines its national development goals and specific strategies to achieve sustainable development.



**Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC):** is a GEF funded and UNDP/SPREP implemented project to support appropriate adaptation centric policies, demonstrate cost-effective adaptation techniques in key sectors, and promote regional cooperation.

**Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement Project (PIGARREP):** is a GEF funded and UNDP/SPREP implemented project to reduce the growth rate of GHG emissions from fossil fuel use in the Pacific Island Countries.

**Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD):** is a methodology for avoiding the release of carbon dioxide emissions and, by using these forests as carbon sinks lessening future carbon dioxide emissions. It is estimated that 20% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted into the atmosphere comes from deforestation and, as a major greenhouse gas, contributes significantly to global climate change.

**Resilience:** is the ability (or measure) of ecosystems, social systems and people to withstand the adverse effects of climate change related risks. This can be measured using various methods and approaches to V&A assessments.

**Smaller Island States (SIS):** is a sub grouping of Pacific small island countries under the Pacific Islands Forum.

**Vulnerability:** is the degree to which a system is susceptible to or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Vulnerability is the function of the character, magnitude, and rate of climate variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity.

**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** is an international environmental treaty aimed at stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.





GOVERNMENT OF NIUE

