

2024 Consultation Workshop for Climate Change, Human Rights and Business, Pacific Program

Suva, Fiji 25 – 27 June 2024

Report



1. Summary

The Diplomacy Training Program’s (DTP) 2024 Pacific Consultation workshop for its Climate Change, Human Rights and Business Program took place in Suva, Fiji from 25-27 June with 17 participants from civil society organisations (CSOs) and experts from across the Pacific working on human rights and/or climate change. The program was held in partnership with Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO), Citizens’ Constitutional Forum (CCF) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Pacific Regional Office (OHCHR-ROP).

DTP trainers, Professor Surya Deva and Joshua Cooper led sessions on sustainable development, human rights and business and the UN Human Rights system. There was a focus on the human rights impacts of climate change, and the importance of integrating human rights into advocacy and responses to the climate crisis. There were presentations on the rights of people with disabilities, climate finance, women’s and LGBTQI+ centred approaches, Banaban human rights defenders, loss and damage and adaptation and mitigation. The different sessions were facilitated by DTP alumni.

Voices from the Pacific have long advocated for different, more sustainable, planet centred approaches to development. These voices have become more urgent with the impacts of the climate crisis in the Pacific. The program explored how international human rights standards could be integrated and strengthen advocacy on climate action, the environment, sustainable development, to influence government and business.

The consultation enabled DTP to learn from affected communities and better understand capacity building needs. This report provides a summary of the program, its outcomes and next steps. The program schedule and participant list are provided as an appendix. DTP thanks its supporters and the [Australian NGO Cooperation Program \(ANCP\)](#) for making the workshop possible.

2. Background and Objectives

DTP's capacity building programs are driven by a commitment to support civil society advocates as they seek to influence policy and practice, and claim their human rights. The programs build knowledge, skills and networks and provide spaces to learn and exchange knowledge. This workshop is part of that commitment.

DTP has close to 500 alumni across the Pacific – from programs through the 1990s to 2023 – on issues of self-determination, the environment, children's rights, migration and most recently the SDGs and Business and Human Rights.

DTP's partners and alumni and others have identified climate change as a priority for its advocacy capacity building. They have asked DTP to develop a new program to address the need for CSOs to be able to engage with governments, business and international forums to promote and protect human rights in responses to climate change.

Accordingly, DTP organised a three-day workshop with alumni, CSOs and experts in the region. The purpose of the workshop was to build understanding and develop a three-year capacity building strategy on human rights and climate change in the Pacific.

3. Participants¹

The participants were identified through consultation with partners. First, PIANGO, CCF, OHCHR-ROP, DTP alumni and trainers and other DTP partners in the region (such as Jubilee, Amnesty International Australia) nominated individuals. Second, DTP published a call for alumni expressions of interest in participating in the workshop. In selecting participants for invitation, DTP took the following criteria into account:



- Involvement with CSOs/NGOs active on climate change and human rights issues;
- Capacity to apply the program outcomes to their work and organisation; and
- Gender and regional balance within the program overall.

4. Workshop Agenda

The workshop agenda was designed to facilitate introductions, share knowledge, map connections, identify gaps and interest in further training. DTP trainers, Professor Surya Deva and Joshua Cooper, provided sessions on the Right to Development (Planet Centred Participatory Development) and elements of the climate change agenda around the key themes of a) Adaptation and Mitigation, b) Loss and Damage, and c) Climate Finance (Surya) and UN mechanisms and opportunities for Pacific participation (Joshua). Surya and Joshua along with DTP alumni/participants were asked to facilitate the different sessions, with each of the participants sharing about their work and the work of their organisation.

¹ List of participants can be found attached in Annex A.

The sessions on each day were as follows:



Day 1 – 25 June 2024

- Introductions – sharing organisation and focus of their work
- Climate Change, Human Rights and Business: Towards Planet Centred Participatory Development – *Surya Deva*
- Human Rights and Climate Change: Sharing on Current Activities and Gaps:
 - Sevania Tuicau - *CCF*
 - Joseph Sikulu – *Pacific 350*
 - Mr Laisiana Rogoyawa - *Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission*
 - Roshika Deo – *Pacific Human Rights Defenders Network*
 - Alfred Ralifo – *World Wildlife Fund*
 - Wilfer Afrete Rigamoto – *Pacific Conference of Churches*
- Reflections on Engaging with UN and other Intergovernmental Processes and Mechanisms/Using International Agreements
 - Tevita Naikasowalu – *Business and Human Rights Forum*
 - Joseph Sikulu - *COP*
 - Louchrisha Hussain – *UPR and Treaty bodies*



Day 2 – 26 June 2024

- Human Rights and Climate Change Advocacy – Some of the Key Intersections: Introduction by Professor Surya Deva. Working Group Discussions: a) Adaptation and Mitigation; b) Loss and Damage; and c) Climate Finance Lavetanalagi “Lagi” Seru (*Global Green Grants Fund*)
- Climate Change - Intersectional and disproportionate impacts on children, women, persons with disability, Indigenous Peoples and migration – Using international frameworks and processes to advocate holistic responses of government and business
- Climate Change and Human Rights for Pacific Communities – Current Advocacy and Gaps
 - Ulaiasi Koroi – *National Youth Council*
 - Viniana Cakau – *CCF*
 - Rae Bainteiti – *Banaban Human Rights Defenders Network*
- Mapping the UN + Processes for 2025 and Beyond - Identifying capacity building needs/CSO preparations for engagement etc – *Joshua Cooper*

Day 3 – 27 June 2024

- Lessons Learnt in Capacity Building to Date
 - Sevania Tuicau - CCF
 - Mr Laisiana Rogoyawa – *Fiji Human Rights Commission*
 - Tepola Rabuli – *Pacific Disability Forum*
- Capacity building/training discussion and planning



5. Workshop Outcomes

The agenda, and the approach of short presentations reflecting on experience and current contexts followed by working group discussions, proved useful in identifying gaps and needs and providing opportunities for collaboration and networking. Participants agreed the need to build knowledge of human rights standards and commitments, along with understanding of how to engage the different parts of the UN system to strengthen advocacy.

It was agreed that new capacity building programs should not duplicate existing programs, but that there were clear gaps currently in relation to human rights and climate change advocacy and capacity building in the region. The gaps identified by the participants included:



- Knowledge and skills in human rights
- Knowledge on democracy and democratic rights of participation and accountability
- Indigenous Peoples rights – in relation to other rights, such as land rights
- How to engage in the UN human rights and SDGs reporting processes
- Media and digital rights – security/safety; use for advocacy; access
- Right to Religious Freedom/Freedom of Conscience and Speech
- Community knowledge of human rights and climate change.

In addition it was felt that a capacity building strategy could help address the problems of “Siloing of work/issues” and lack of sharing of knowledge and information resulting in duplication of work and data.

These gaps meant that experience was not being shared or developed cumulatively, communities/victims/advocates were not aware of avenues of potential remedy, or where they could go for support, and that linkages between human rights advocates and climate change advocates in the Pacific were underdeveloped. The need to include the women’s, disability, children’s, Indigenous and LGBTI+ movements in the work was highlighted.

6. Next Steps

It was agreed that DTP would:

- Draft and circulate a draft of the workshop report;

- Draft a timetable of Pacific activities up to COP 31 (the Pacific COP) in 2026 for the group in their advocacy.
- Facilitate links with NGOs engaging in Australia’s Universal Periodic Review (2025) to enable Pacific scrutiny of Australia’s climate policies
- Draft a 3-year capacity building strategy for consultation and input by the group and others involved in capacity building on human rights and climate change in the Pacific
- Consider organising an Annual Pacific Human Rights and Peoples’ Diplomacy Training Program (based on Pacific demand for its annual Asia-Pacific program in Timor Leste.)



Annex A – Participants

S.N	Name	Organisation
1	Alefina Vuki	Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission
2	Alfred Ralifo	WWF-Pacific
3	Fatubun Wensislaus	
4	Sarita Kashyap	Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission
5	Isikeli Vulavou	Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network (<i>PSGDN</i>)
6	Jeke Tikoicina	Banaban Human Rights Defenders Network
7	Joseph Sikulu	350 Pacific
8	Laisiana Rogoyawa	Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission
9	Lavetanalagi (Lagi) Seru	Global Green Grants Fund
10	Louchrisha Hussain	International Union for Conservation of Nature Oceania Regional Office (IUCN ORO)
11	Rae Bainteiti (attended to present)	Banaban Human Rights Defenders Network
12	Roshika Deo	
13	Sevania Tuicau	Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF)
14	Tepola Rabuli	Pacific Disability Forum
15	Tevita Naikasowalu	Commission of Social and Ecological Justice
16	Ulaiasi Koroi	National Youth Council (Fiji)
17	Viniana Cakau	Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF)
18	Wilfer Rigamoto	Pacific Council of Churches