

Pacific Connections

EUDevDays, High Level Panel

Co-organized by: University of St Andrews, Pacific Division of the
European External Action Service & University of Warsaw
Room 316, New Library, University of Warsaw
16th December 2011

*'Pacific Connections' presents an innovative dialogue between academic researchers,
policy-makers and civil society - drawn from both the Pacific and EU.*

Context

Epeli Hau'ofa criticized the belittling consequences of viewing the Pacific as comprising island states and territories that were too small, too poorly endowed, and too isolated and distant from the centres of economic growth, and thereby destined to a hopeless dependency on the assistance of wealthier nations. Instead, Hau'ofa focused on the journeys, exchanges and relations through which a vast ocean region is intimately inter-connected as 'our sea of islands'. Similarly, we can either see how the EU and Pacific are isolated by distance, or else see how the consumer and life choices of their peoples are intimately connected.

Social and economic relations always involve tensions between views, and some connections that are more visible than others. Democracy requires the negotiation of differences. 'Pacific Connections' has the objective of giving prominence to, and making more visible, some of the most important connections between the EU and the Pacific in the context of development.

Objective

A two-way relationship exists between EU attempts to connect development ideas to Pacific ways & Pacific attempts to connect to development initiatives: closer understanding of these connections is desirable.

'Pacific Connections' has two related aims: Firstly, describing the kinds of relations or connections made by Pacific peoples themselves so as to portray the aspirations, constraints and cultural terms that any development initiative has to deal with. Secondly, describing the kinds of relations or connections that exist between people in the EU and people in the Pacific. By focusing on natural resources and climate change the panelists will reveal both sides of development relations -- the contemporary realities of local Pacific Connections, and of international EU-Pacific Connections.

Intended Outcome

For Epeli Hau'ofa, the key issue at stake in his vision of 'our sea of islands' was to insist on seeing the Pacific through its own particular logic and worldview. In his critique, no amount generous benevolence and good intentions could substitute for the empowering democracy of dealing with the issues of life in one's own cultural terms. These Pacific ideas of autonomy and relatedness -- of islands, of communities, of people -- suggest a model for re-figuring development relations.

The jointly organized session will also engage and offer recommendations for the EU to renew its development partnership with the Pacific and support more effectively Pacific Island Countries and Territories in attaining the MDGs, while tackling climate change and natural disaster challenges.

Key Issues

- Are the full benefits of democracy dependent upon a full democracy of participating worldviews? Does a greater stake in one depend on a greater stake for the other?
- How are the consumer and life choices of EU and Pacific peoples intimately connected?
- How do we identify meeting points between EU attempts to connect development ideas to Pacific ways, and Pacific attempts to connect to development initiatives?

/Schedule and Running Order

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9.00 - 9.20
Introduction

Prof. Maciej Jędrusik, University of Warsaw, Poland
Andris Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Development
Dr Tony Crook, Centre for Pacific Studies, University of St Andrews, Scotland

9.20 - 10.20
Climate Change

Dr Joeli Veitayaki, Oceans and Islands, University of the South Pacific, Fiji
Prof. Edvard Hviding, University of Bergen, Norway
Paul Lokani, Deputy Chairman, Tulele Peisa
Q&A

10.20 - 11.20
Natural Resources

Prof. James Leach, University of Aberdeen, Scotland
Catherine Sparks, Melanesia Program, The Christensen Fund
Diarmid O'Sullivan, Global Witness
Q&A

11.20 - 12.20
Gender

Prof. Christina Toren, University of St Andrews, Scotland
Fiona Hukula, National Research Institute, Papua New Guinea
Prof. Knut Rio, University of Bergen, Norway
Gosia Lachut, Pacific Division, European External Action Service
Q&A

12.20 - 13.00
Roundtable &
Wrap-up

[Moderator's Remarks](#)
Dr Tony Crook, University of St Andrews, Scotland
[Final Remarks](#)
Abdoul-Aziz M'Baye, EU Ambassador to the Pacific

Break for Lunch

14.00 – 16.30
Films

[Introductory Remarks](#)
Dr Paula Marcinkowska, University of Warsaw, Poland
Sun Come Up (38 mins) is an Academy Award® nominated film that shows the human face of climate change. The film follows the relocation of the Carteret Islanders, a community living on a remote island chain in the South Pacific Ocean, and now, some of the world's first environmental refugees.

The Hungry Tide (80 mins) is a personal story about the Pacific nation of Kiribati which is on the front line of climate change. Sea level rise and increasing salinity are threatening the lives of 105,000 people spread over 33 atolls. It's the same ocean, which for generations has sustained the country that is now the source of its destruction.
Q&A