

Speech: High Commissioner Melanie Hopkins is guest speaker at the Pacific Regional NDC Steering Committee Meeting

It's a pleasure to be here to represent the UK as a major donor to the Pacific NDC hub and to support our partners GIZ.

Climate change is the backbone of the UK-Pacific relationship and we stand side by side as global leaders on climate change. There are few subjects which unite people across generations and borders to the same degree.

The UK is leading by example domestically, our climate change act, which was the first of its kind, has just celebrated its 10 year anniversary and has been used as a model here in the Pacific.

Internationally, the UK continues to make the case for increased ambition and helping partners to deliver this. We are proud to be a member of the High Ambition Coalition and the Carbon Neutrality Coalition.

Here in the Pacific the UK contributes almost \$88 million USD to the International Climate Finance (ICF), covering a range of areas including renewable energy and wastewater management, with a particular focus on strengthening climate and risk resilience.

The UK is also a significant contributor to key climate change multilateral funds, which provide support to the Pacific region, including £720 million to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), £250 million to the Global Environment Facility, and £40 million to the Climate Investment Funds.

To support the Fijian Presidency of COP23, the UK provided FJD\$4.4m and, most recently in our current role of Chair-in-office of the Commonwealth we have provided £1.2 million for the establishment of this Pacific NDC hub. The CHOGM communique recognised that concerted action is required to address the unique challenges and vulnerabilities of small and vulnerable states to ensure their full participation in and contribution to a more prosperous future.

Nationally Determined contributions are at the heart of the Paris Agreement. Each NDC reflects the country's ambition for reducing emissions, and whilst the contribution of PIC's to global greenhouse gas emissions may be small, a transition to a low carbon and green economy is critical for overall sustainable development.

I am proud to say that in the UK, since 1990, we have reduced our emissions by 42% whilst still growing our economy by 72%.

Ahead of the Paris Agreement, PICs were congratulated for swiftly declaring

ambitious NDC's, but now 5 years on, at COP26, there is the opportunity to enhance these NDC's and most importantly, to further incorporate the resilience and adaptation priorities of the Pacific. Through the Talanoa Dialogue, countries are being asked to respond to three main questions, where are we now? Where do we want to get to? And 'How can we achieve it? The NDC hub will provide technical assistance to support PICs when answering these questions, and in doing so there is the potential to deliver significant social and economic benefits, and enhance resilience more broadly across the Region.

COP26 in 2020 will be a pivotal moment to take stock of global ambition and prepare the ground for further action. I am delighted to say that the UK has formally expressed interest in hosting COP26. The UK Government is determined to sustain our historic leadership on climate change, and believe we would be a committed, ambitious and effective host.

The UK will also lead the resilience strand of the UNSG's Climate summit later this year and we are keen to work in partnership with PICs to bring commitments to the summit that will drive truly transformational change and accelerate the transition to a climate resilient planet.

In its leadership role the UK Government has the opportunity to use its diplomatic weight to amplify the voice of the Pacific on the global climate change platform.

I would like to encourage all country representatives here this evening to draw on the technical expertise of the NDC hub. The deadline for resubmission is around the corner and this regional hub offers not only the potential to build resilience regionally, but also present renewed opportunity for the Pacific to lead from the front at COP. Thank you, vinaka vakalevu and Fa'eksea!