

# PACNEWS

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VAN - DIPLOMACY: VANUATU LOOP

PACNEWS 3: Thu 26 May 2016

## **Vanuatu supports China's proposition on South China Sea**

PORT VILA, 26 MAY 2016 (VANUATU LOOP) ---- The Vanuatu Government says it fully understands and support China's proposition on the issue of South China Sea.

And Vanuatu has called on parties directly concerned to stay committed to open friendly dialogue and peaceful settlement of disputes over territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests around the area.

In an unprecedented statement concerning International territorial Maritime Boundary disputes, Prime Minister Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas says while respecting the rights of parties to independently choose the means of the disputes settlement, Vanuatu respects China's 2006 declaration in light of Article 298 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the south sea (UNCLOS). He said as such any prior consent of the parties to the dispute must be sought before proceeding with any third party settlement.

"Vanuatu maintains that settlement of territorial and maritime disputes must be done through friendly consultation and negotiations and in accordance with international law and all bilateral agreements including the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) by parties directly concerned," said the prime minister.

He said Vanuatu also maintains the principle that relevant claims on any territorial and maritime rights and interests must be based on the historical and cultural facts.

"Any arbitrary imposition of unilateral measures including instituting legal proceedings against other parties in the dispute run contrary to the principle of mutual understanding, mutual dialogue and friendly consultation as enshrined in the principles of UNCLOS" said PM Tabimasmas.

He made the statement prior to his departure for the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) meeting in Papua New Guinea next week.

Last month the ACP Council of Ministers adopted a resolution directing the ACP Secretariat to take steps to support Member States in negotiating improved bilateral Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements with the EU.

Among many other issues, it also discussed the territorial tensions between Belize and Guatemala, as well as between Guyana and Venezuela, with Ministers confirming their support for the territorial integrity of ACP Member States in these disputes..... PACNEWS

SAMOA - SOLAR POWER: TALAMUA ONLINE

PACNEWS 3: Thu 26 May 2016

### **Solar Facility launch moves Samoa's 100% renewable target closer**

APIA, 26 MAY 2016 (TALAMUA ONLINE) ---- The Samoan Government's target to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2017 moved one step closer with the opening of a 2.1MW solar plant today.

The solar plant is located in the middle of the Faleata Racecourse and the electricity it will produce will save 1,900,000 litres of diesel on average each year and displace approximately 5,115 tons of carbon dioxide annually.

Owned by Solar for Samoa, the 2.1MW (DC) solar plant will offset a substantial portion of Samoa's existing diesel-generated electricity; which currently accounts for nearly two-thirds of the country's energy mix.

The project is the first stage of Solar for Samoa's total 5.2MW (DC) solar photovoltaic (PV) project that is scheduled to come online in July 2016.

In celebrating this milestone, the Prime Minister of Samoa, Tuila'epa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi acknowledged the projects contribution not only to bringing down the cost of electricity but to a cleaner environment. He said this was governments aim to deregulate the generation of electricity from the government owned EPC monopoly to generate competition and bring prices down.

Solar for Samoa believes that utility-scale solar will play an integral role in reducing the country's reliance on diesel generation and has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring timelines was met in support of the country's renewable energy targets.

"We are proud to achieve this important clean energy milestone for the Samoan Government, which is the result of a long standing cooperation between Solar for Samoa and Electric Power Corporation, and demonstrates Solar for Samoa's ability to complete this world-class facility within the government's renewable energy target timelines," said Terrence Betham, Director of Solar for Samoa.

Solar detail body Image "We applaud the Samoan Government and in particular the Prime Minister's leadership, with support from the relevant Government Ministries including the Electric Power Corporation and the Ministry of Finance, in promoting this project and renewable energy for the Pacific region. We are honoured to provide the Samoan population with reliable, long-term renewable energy."

The electricity from the project will be purchased by the Samoa Electrical Power Corporation under a 20-year Power Purchase Agreement (PPA).

According to Betham, the project will not only bring energy security to the Samoan people, but has also contributed significantly to the Samoan economy with over 100 local jobs created during the construction phase.

Solar for Samoa's second 3.1MW (DC) solar Facility is still under construction adjacent to the Faleolo International Airport and is currently scheduled to come online in mid-2016.

Solar for Samoa is developing an approximately 5.2 MW (DC) photovoltaic solar power project comprising of two facilities at separate locations on the island of Upolu, Samoa. The Faleata Racecourse facility is located near the capital city of Apia on a 2.6-hectare site at the Faleata Racecourse and has a total capacity of 2.1 MW (DC). The Faleolo International Airport facility is located approximately 40 kilometers west of Apia on a 4.3-hectare site at the Faleolo International Airport and has a total capacity of 3.1 MW (DC)..... PACNEWS

**100-person Guard of Honour for NZ PM Key**

SUVA, 26 MAY 2016 (FIJI SUN) ---- A 100-person guard of honour by the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) will be mounted for New Zealand Prime John Key when he arrives in the country on June 9.

RFMF chief of staff Colonel Litea Seruiratu confirmed this Wednesday.

Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama also confirmed Key's visit.

Key will also be accorded a full traditional iTaukei welcome ceremony.

Deputy Permanent Secretary for the iTaukei Affairs Apakuki Kurisiga said that all other details about the visit would be released by the Government.

The New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, Mark Ramsden, is in NZ and could not be reached to comment. It is understood he is there to help Wellington finalise details for the visit. He is due back in his office in Suva on Monday.

Key will be the first NZ PM since 2006 to make an official visit to Fiji. Relations between the countries had soured after the 2006 takeover.

They were restored after the 2014 general election. Despite differences over the Pacific Islands Forum, the two leaders have focused on areas that will strengthen relations..... PACNEWS

F/POLY - DECOLONISATION: RNZI

PACNEWS 3: Thu 26 May 2016

**Tahiti's Fritch wants to attend UN General Assembly**

PARIS, 26 MAY 2015 (RNZI) --- The French Polynesian president Edouard Fritch says he would like to attend the October session of the UN General Assembly when decolonisation issues will be discussed.

Speaking after a meeting with officials of the French foreign ministry in Paris, Fritch said it was time another voice was heard on the issue, which reflected the views of the majority of Polynesians. French Polynesia.

The move was the culmination of efforts by the pro-independence movement but was decried by its political rivals, including Fritch, who called for France to hold an independence vote.

France rejected the call and denounced the UN decision as a glaring interference.

Paris has all but ignored the world body on the matter.

The head of the French foreign ministry's UN section, Guillaume Dabouis, now said it was legitimate and important for the French Polynesian president to attend the UN General Assembly.

New Caledonia, which is the other French Pacific territory on the UN decolonisation list, is set to have an independence referendum by 2018..... PACNEWS

VAN - DEPORTATION: VANUATU LOOP

PACNEWS 3: Thu 26 May 2016

**Vanuatu Immigration deports Solomon Islands' self-proclaimed pastor**

PORT VILA, 26 MAY 2016 (VANUATU LOOP) --- A Solomon Islands national was deported from Vanuatu Wednesday afternoon by immigration officials for breaching immigration laws.

Martine Nehemiah, arrived in Vanuatu in 2013 and was able to convince local politicians to grant him a special open visa to travel in and out of Vanuatu.

His stay in Vanuatu was impelled by a visit to his home village of Koyo in Guadalcanal by the Presbyterian Paama Seaside Men's Fellowship in 2013.

He later proclaimed himself a pastor after encountering unfavorable relationship with the Port Vila Presbyterian Session and formed his own evangelical prayer ministry and resided in different places in Port Vila.

Martine, known in Vanuatu as pastor Martine, had closely knitted himself with certain prominent political leaders. He was actively running prayer crusades around Port Vila.

When the 14 convicted politicians were remanded and waiting for the Appeal's Court judgment, "pastor Martine" maneuvered the wives and families of the convicts to conduct prayer and fasting sessions, promising their release but that came to no avail.

Sources confirmed he had been soliciting funds from people who went to him to pray for their miseries and from tithes paid into his ministry.

Within three and half years of his ministry in Vanuatu, Martine had fathered four children with separate young Vanuatu female followers – thus triggering concerns amongst community members and families of his victims.

Christian church leaders in Vanuatu were alarmed when advised about the activities and practices of the so-called "pastor".

Immigration authorities acted on complaints they had received and discovered that the self-proclaimed pastor had in his possession a special visa outside the special visa categories specified under the Immigration Act.

Government sources say Martine's deportation had been delayed until Wednesday because of his frequent moves to different locations. But that was short-lived when he was seen escorted by immigration officials to the Bauerfield Airport to catch the afternoon Air Pacific flight to Suva where he will be transiting on his return to his wife and three children in Honiara.

Meanwhile, a community leader of the Paama Seaside Men's Fellowship described the situation as "unfortunate", adding that he had been warned by a Solomon Islands pastor during their visit in 2013 of Martine's engagement with the group. Martine was the group's guide during their two-week stay.

Isaac says Martine's deportation came as no surprise following the experiences encountered with the Port Vila session of the Presbyterian Church.... PACNEWS

FIJI - HEALTH RESPONSE: DFAT

PACNEWS 3: Thu 26 May 2016

### **Australian medical team provides disaster response training for Fiji health officials**

SUVA, 26 MAY 2016 (DFAT) --- A team of medical consultants from the Australian National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC) are in Fiji this week to facilitate disaster response training for local health officials.

The Australian funded NCCTRC was invited by the Ministry of Health to deliver training to enhance local health officials' approach to disaster medical management in the region.

This training follows on from an earlier collaboration between the Ministry of Health and NCCTRC when a team comprising of 21 Australian Medical Assistance Teams (AUSMAT) personnel were deployed to Fiji to provide support immediately after Tropical Cyclone Winston.

NCCTRC's Acting Director Disaster, Preparedness and Response, Abigail Trewin, who led the AUSMAT deployment post Tropical Cyclone Winston, was delighted to be back in Fiji working closely again with the Ministry to enhance its disaster response preparedness.

"We are really pleased to be working with the Ministry of Health to support Fiji in building its disaster resilience," Trewin said.

Acting Australian High Commissioner, Karinda D'Aloisio, welcomed the NCCTRC team's training support to the Ministry and noted Australia's continued support to Fiji's recovery efforts post Cyclone Winston.

"The NCCTRC is an important component of Australia's capacity to respond to regional disasters. Australia remains committed to supporting Fiji's recovery efforts post Tropical Cyclone Winston and this training will help ensure that local disaster response systems are even more resilient in the future," said D'Aloisio.

Acting Deputy Secretary Hospital Services, Dr Luisa Cikamatana of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, commended the training support provided by NCCTRC to enhance the Ministry's response for future disasters.

"This training will enable the Ministry to build its capacity to be able to effectively and efficiently respond to the health needs of any disaster within Fiji, to the region and also outside the region. The Ministry is committed to continue with our collegiality with AUSMAT and implement the recommendations of AUSMAT's Response team's support after Tropical Cyclone Winston," said Dr Luisa Cikamatana.

Dr Cikamatana also expressed appreciation of the enormous assistance provided by the Government of Australia to the Ministry, inclusive of health care services to the people of Fiji.

Funded by the Australian Government, the NCCTRC provides clinical and academic leadership in disaster and trauma care. The NCCTRC is based in Darwin. It provides a rapid response capability, as well as training in disaster response across the Pacific. ....PACNEWS

GUAM - DEFICIT: THE GUAM DAILY POST

PACNEWS 3: Thu 26 May 2016

#### **Public auditor: GovGuam has \$871M deficit**

HAGATNA, 26 MAY 2016 (THE GUAM DAILY POST) ---- While the government of Guam has grown into a billion dollar entity, it has US\$871 million in unrestricted deficit - representing its cumulative overspending going back from 1997 to this day, according to Public Auditor Doris Flores Brooks.

Brooks, who spoke at the Guam Chamber of Commerce luncheon meeting at the Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort yesterday, said that although GovGuam has US\$1.9 billion in assets, it has US\$1.7 billion in liabilities. Out of the liabilities, US\$1 billion are in bonds, US \$200 million has been set aside for long-term leases, such as the John F. Kennedy High School and Okkodo High School projects, which the government has financed over the last 10 years.

According to Brooks, the vast majority of the \$1 billion in bonds taken out by the government was set aside for paying income tax refunds.

"Every governor since Joe Ada has borrowed anywhere from the tune of US\$100 million during their term to pay for tax refunds because we don't have cash," she said.

Brooks described a cycle of refinancing the bonds, paying income tax refunds, then additional deficit. She said a bid bond was issued in 2014 to pay off the approximately US\$300 million worth of income tax refunds.

"In 2014, we closed the fiscal year with US\$60 million in the red," she said.

Meanwhile, the Government of Guam Retirement Fund, another unfunded liability, has recently seen a decrease from US\$1.5 billion to US\$1.3 billion, the public auditor said.

Brooks reported that GovGuam is doing well in terms of revenue generation, which reached US\$1.2 billion last fiscal year. A chunk of the revenues were derived from about US\$775 million collected in taxes and around US\$300 million from federal funding.

"The private sector is a very important portion of the Guam economy. The federal economy is also a very important contributor because it pulls in a lot of federal grants," she said, adding that the \$300 million does not include the federal funding received by University of Guam and the Guam Housing and Urban Renewal Agency.

The local Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP programme, receives a big chunk of the federal assistance. "We are getting over \$100 million a year in food stamps into the Guam economy," she said.

In terms of tax collection, Brooks said income tax constitutes the largest revenue received at close to US\$300 million. Gross receipts tax represents another US\$225 million. According to Brooks, GRT figures have not grown that much in almost 20 years. "Back in 1997, we had US\$185 million from GRT," she said. Recent figures indicate around US\$230 million in GRT collections.

Brooks described Section 30 funds as a "godsend." Section 30 funds are federal income taxes derived from active members of the armed forces and pensions paid to retired civilian and military employees of the United States who reside on Guam, but pay federal income tax to the Internal Revenue Service.

According to Brooks, the government receives about US\$80 million a year in Section 30 funds. She said this is why the government has supported the Marines relocation plan since it would increase funds.

Sin taxes, or those derived from tobacco and alcohol, rakes in around US\$21 million and US\$2 million, respectively....PACNEWS

## PACNEWS BIZ

FIJI - BANK: ANZ

PACNEWS BIZ: Thu 26 May 2016

### **ANZ launches free access to Internet Banking for Vodafone Fiji users**

SUVA, 26 MAY 2016 (ANZ) --- ANZ today announced free access to ANZ's Internet Banking platform and website for Vodafone Fiji users.

This means that Vodafone Fiji users will not incur any data costs when accessing ANZ Internet Banking at [www.anz.com/fiji](http://www.anz.com/fiji).

Making the announcement at ANZ's flagship Suva branch today, ANZ Acting CEO Fiji, Saud Minam said the aim of the initiative was to make online banking more convenient and affordable for ANZ and Vodafone customers.

"This partnership aligns perfectly with our strategy to help customers access fast, convenient and secure online banking services from the comfort of their homes or anywhere in Fiji from their handheld mobile devices and tablets," Minam said.

"We recognise technology plays a significant role in our customers' lives and that we need to provide new and innovative solutions that meet their evolving needs," Minam added. "The nature of banking is changing rapidly and more people want to bank online these days rather than go into branches."

Minam also highlighted the need for customers to remain diligent in keeping their Internet Banking details secure as incidents of money transfer scams and other such online fraudulent activities appear to be on the rise in Fiji and across the Pacific.

"I would urge customers to regularly change their Internet Banking passwords and card PINs, starting today, and always protect access to your computer and mobile devices," Minam said. ....PACNEWS

# PACNEWS DIGEST

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## Pacific statisticians to meet in Fiji

SUVA, 26 MAY 2016 (PACIFIC COMMUNITY) ---- Senior government statisticians and development partners will gather in Lautoka, Fiji, next week for a Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC) meeting to discuss major statistical projects and collaboration over the next five years.

The meeting will focus on next steps for implementing the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy 2010–2020 (TYPSS) which is aimed at strengthening statistical capacity throughout the region.

Committee members from Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu have confirmed their participation at the 12th PSSC meeting, along with the Pacific Community (SPC) and invited representatives from National Statistics Offices in the Republic of Kiribati and Solomon Islands.

The speakers will include the Chair of the TYPSS process, Simil Johnson, SPC Deputy Director-General, Audrey Aumua, and the TYPSS Implementation Coordinator, Karen Komiti.

"The Pacific's Ten Year Statistics Strategy and its programmes support informed policy-making and decision-making by governments, underpinning sustainable development," Johnson said.

"We'll be looking at national and regional statistics projects and other major events on the Pacific statistics calendar over the remaining five years of TYPSS, including population censuses, demographic health surveys, household income and expenditure surveys and national statistics development strategies," he added.

Senior representatives of partner organisations, such as Australia's Bureau of Statistics and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Pacific Islands Financial Technical Assistance Centre, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Pacific Community, Statistics New Zealand, United Nations Population Fund, University of the South Pacific, and World Bank, will also participate in the week-long deliberations.

Discussions on the impact and effectiveness of TYPSS initiatives in building statistical capacity are highly anticipated, as well as reports from Technical Working Groups on regional standards and classifications for administrative records, data utilisation, IT and future surveys.

Updates on Sustainable Development Goals indicators, Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS), agriculture and gender statistics, and outcomes of the recent PARIS21 workshop on Agenda 2010 and Small Island Developing States will also be covered.

The meeting will be held at the Waterfront Hotel in Lautoka from 30 May to 2 June 2016....PACNEWS

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# PACNEWS DIGEST

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## **A right to exist – using cutting-edge technology to create better ID systems**

*By Steven Malby*

LONDON, 26 MAY 2016 (COMSEC) ---- Out of more than 7 billion people in the world, 1.5 billion officially do not exist. That is, they do not have a form of identity that is legally recognised by governments.

Sadly, it is all too easy not to exist. Simply being born as a member of a nomadic group in a remote rural area where birth registration is sporadic may suffice. Armed conflict, persecution or forced displacement can take away everything, including invaluable legal documentation. Criminal groups engaged in trafficking in persons or smuggling of migrants forcibly take passports from victims, cementing the process of dehumanisation and commodification.

Without legal identity, people cannot access basic health or education services. They cannot open a bank account, rent or buy property, get a job, or vote. Those fleeing war or persecution cannot prove their origin. Identity is critical to reuniting displaced children with parents and family.

In the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, recognises the right of all to legal identity, including birth registration.

And yet, 'legal identity' is a complex and nuanced concept. It both empowers and invokes concern over privacy and the risk of discrimination. Legal identity can be evidenced in multiple ways: through a birth certificate, a passport, or a national identity card, all used at different times, for different purposes, and in different combinations. Across the Commonwealth a wide range of birth registration, citizenship, and even digital identity laws govern legal identity systems.

Identity systems need to provide an official identity for the six year old girl in rural Africa whose birth was never registered, has never attended school, and been displaced across borders by conflict. Those systems need to do so whilst protecting her right to privacy, and to process information held about her in a way that is secure and reveals only what is necessary to those who need to know.

Delivering legal identity for 1.5 billion people by 2030 is an immense undertaking. It requires new approaches and ways of thinking.

This month, the Commonwealth Secretariat joined forces in a unique summit of private sector enterprises, non-governmental organisations and states at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, to explore ways in which emerging technologies could contribute to this target.

The summit, entitled 'ID2020,' explored the realities of life without identity. It considered ways in which digital identity systems based on 'blockchain' technology could support legal identity for all, including through public-private partnerships. The Secretariat shared experience of legal identity laws from across the Commonwealth, and discussed the needs of member countries with emerging technology firms.

The ID2020 summit will be held every year to provide a platform for action and dialogue between technology innovators, states and international organisations. As a first step in realising the target of legal identity for all, Commonwealth Senior Officials of Law Ministries will review Commonwealth laws on legal and digital identity at their forthcoming meeting in October 2016. The Commonwealth Secretariat is also leading the way in testing digital identity systems through its work on development of a blockchain-based app for the Commonwealth network of criminal justice contact points.

ID2020 represents not only a significant step forward towards realisation of Sustainable Development Goal 16, but also Goal 17, on revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

The Commonwealth Secretariat will play its full role, supporting and partnering with member countries, and the global community, to promote the rule of law and ensure for all a right to exist.....PACNEWS

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# PACNEWS DIGEST

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## **Amid 'bad year' for coral, UN launches tool and report outlining ways to protect threatened reefs**

NEW YORK, 26 MAY 2016 (UN NEWS CENTRE) --- At the second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) taking place in Nairobi this week, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) was among a group of agencies launching a new tool and report that recommends ways to protect threatened coral reefs.

"Humans have left an indelible mark on the marine environment that has led to almost 20 per cent of coral reefs disappearing. But coral reefs are an invaluable natural asset we can't afford to lose," said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner in a press release.

"To give them a fighting chance, we need early and effective action on climate change," he said.

UNEP noted that there has been unprecedented coral bleaching on the northern and central Great Barrier Reef, one of the world's most iconic reefs and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Bleaching in the central Indian Ocean is also severe, in the Maldives, Sri Lanka and in the Lakshadweep islands of India, where up to 100 per cent of corals are bleached in some locations. Many will not survive.

A dataset by UNEP, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Pacific Islands Climate Science Center of the United States Geological Survey provides a new tool to prioritise reef management in the face of climate change.

By downscaling climate model projections for coral bleaching conditions, the time when severe bleaching conditions can be expected at a frequency of twice per decade, and when bleaching can be expected annually, has been identified, for all the world's coral reefs, at a resolution of 4 kilometres, UNEP said.

The new report, Mesophotic Coral Ecosystems: A Lifeboat for Coral Reefs, examines what we know – and don't know – about submerged reefs, and shows that coral ecosystems that live in low light conditions come to the rescue in some situations.

The report found that bleaching is chief among the threats of climate change to coral reefs. When bleaching occurs frequently, reefs become more vulnerable to erosion and lose their structure, which in turn means that their productivity and provision of ecosystems services diminish.

This will have wide-ranging impact on coastal dwellers in more than 100 countries, including most small island developing States, affecting in particular people who depend on reefs for income or food, as well as industry sectors developed around reefs, such as tourism, UNEP stressed.

As the global climate heats up, shallow coral reefs will experience increasing levels of catastrophic bleaching and mortality. Even if emission reduction committed to by countries in the Paris Agreement are achieved, more than three quarters of all the world's reefs will experience bleaching conditions annually within this century, UNEP said.

The agency noted, however, there is a glimmer of hope in the great variation within and among countries.

"Many reefs are projected to experience annual bleaching conditions more than 10 years later than reefs within the same country or territory," said Ruben van Hooidonk, NOAA Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory.

These "relative refugia" are coral reef conservation priorities, and can be found within 16 of the 20 countries with the greatest reef area in the world, including, for example, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Australia.

"Until now we have not been able to identify such refugia on reefs because the spatial scale of climate models is too coarse. This dataset provides an important resource in prioritizing reef management, including establishment of marine protected areas and reduction of direct human stresses to support ecosystem resilience," said van Hooidonk.

Available through a newly developed coral reef theme on UNEP Live, the data can be freely downloaded and used for management or adaptation planning as well as outreach.

UNEP said that in order to buy coral reefs more time and to support recovery of reefs that have bleached severely, some researchers are looking deeper for answers. They are studying submerged, light-dependent reefs to see if they may serve as lifeboats for nearby, connected shallow reefs that have been damaged by repeated bleaching. Mesophotic coral reefs are one of the few remaining ecosystems on earth to remain largely unexplored.

"While they are deeper and more remote than shallow coral ecosystems, mesophotic reefs are still subject to some of the same effects such as bleaching and habitat destruction," Steiner said. "We are just beginning to understand them, but in some locations they may resist the most immediate impacts of climate change, and may be able to help re-seed damaged or destroyed surface reefs and fish populations."

The report's main recommendations include to locate where mesophotic reefs exist, with a priority in the equatorial Indo-West Pacific and eastern Atlantic; to increase understanding of how they are connected to shallow reefs in order to understand the extent to which they can be used as a refuge for, or to reseed, shallow reefs; and to raise awareness among managers and policymakers of the importance of their ecosystem service values and encourage measures to protect them.

These tools may support implementation of the proposed UNEA-2 resolution on coral reefs, UNEP said.

"There is truly no time to waste, and UNEA-2 is an opportunity to accelerate action on safeguarding our planet," said Steiner..... PACNEWS