



Divine Word University
Fiji National University
National University of Samoa
Pacific Adventist University
PNG University of Natural Resources and Environment
PNG University of Technology
Solomon Islands National University
The University of Goroka
The University of the South Pacific
University of Fiji
University of French Polynesia
University of New Caledonia
University of Papua New Guinea

**3rd PACIFIC ISLANDS UNIVERSITIES RESEARCH NETWORK
(PIURN) CONFERENCE,
University of French Polynesia, Pape'ete, Tahiti,
8 – 10 October 2018**

The 3rd PIURN Conference, successfully concluded on 10 October 2018, marks another milestone for the organization as it evolves into maturity.

PIURN is a consortium of all universities in the Pacific Islands Countries established in 2012 to enable closer and meaningful collaboration among researchers in the consortium, with the view to identify and address, via Research, Development & Innovation, priority social, and economic development, and environmental challenges for the Pacific Island Countries (PICS).

NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS IN PRIORITY AREAS

Internal Partners

As one of the most successful outcomes of the 3rd PIURN Conference, four focused areas dictating future collaborations emerged. These areas also address the priorities of the Samoa Pathway.

1. Food Security & Nutrition, and Health & Non-Communicable Diseases;
2. Climate Change & Biodiversity, including Land Degradation
3. Capacity Building, and Data & Statistics; and
4. Social Development, Gender Equality & Education.

Indeed, our current joint projects (conducted both in English and French) worth almost \$USD0.25m, reflect these themes:



1. *Air Pollution in Pacific Island cities: PM2.5 measurements, its elemental composition and bio-monitoring.* **HEALTH**, USP-funded
2. *Addressing threats to traditional food security and diet quality in the rural Pacific.* **FOOD SECURITY**, USP-funded
3. *Towards National Drinking Water Standards in Vanuatu: Applied Research and Capacity Building.* **HEALTH**, USP-funded
4. *Evaluating the Effectiveness of s of National Adaptation Programme of Action on Climate Change in five Pacific Least Development Countries (LDC's) – The Case of Solomon Islands.* **CLIMATE CHANGE**, USP-funded
5. *PACIFIC NICKELATORS : Advancing nickel hyperaccumulator plants discovery and utilization for mining site rehabilitation across Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia and Australia,* **BIODIVERSITY & LAND DEGRADATION**, UNC-funded
6. *"PINNACLE : Pacific Islands Neighbor Network for the ACcess to Local E-databases"* **DATA & STATISTICS**, UNC-funded
7. *Création du Réseau académique du Pacifique sur les migrations et le changement climatique,* **CLIMATE CHANGE**, UNC-funded
8. *AASIP (Agriculture familiale, alimentation et santé dans les îles du Pacifique)* **FOOD SECURITY**, UNC-funded
9. *POLPAC (Polluants organiques et métalliques au sein des compartiments trophiques des récifs coralliens du Pacifique insulaire)* **BIODIVERSITY**, UNC-funded
10. *SOSPADIS (dynamique et organisation socio-spaciales dans les squats urbains: modelisation multi-agents pour l'approvisionnement en eau potable)* **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**, UNC-funded

The last 4 projects are new projects funded this year by UNC.



USP researchers at the 3rd PIURN Conference; Dr. Danielle Watson (2nd from left) and Mr. Pita Bulamainavalu who is presenting.

External Partners

Pacific Islands Development Forum

At the Conference, history was also made when PIURN signed a MoU with its first-ever external partner, the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF). The MoU touches on the following aspects of partnership:

- Facilitating the collaboration between academic and research institutions in the Pacific for the advancement of Pacific Green and Blue Economies;
- Collaborating in publications on subjects relevant to both organizations;
- Keeping each informed of activities organized by the respective organizations;
- Supporting each other's missions, including through submissions and implementations of joint initiatives;
- Contributing to each other's websites, newsletters, etc., on topics relevant to the audience of both organizations.

The Secretary General of PIDF, Mr. François Martel, was invited to do a presentation during the meeting of the PIURN Board held on 10 October 2018.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Government of New Zealand

A representative of the MFTA, Ms. Amanda-Lanuola Dunlop, was invited to present the intentions of MFTA. She mentioned that MFTA intended to support the delivery of high-quality research on Pacific issues such as climate change, security, and governance. MFAT also intended to support human development, in particular in the area of research skills development, because it was important to MFAT that the research they supported were conducted by the people of the region for the region.



PIURN Board meeting. Second from left: Mr. François Martel, Secretary General of PIDF. Second from right is Ms. Amanda-Lanuola Dunlop of MFAT, Government of NZ.

Ministry of Education and Training, Government of the Republic of Vanuatu

Two representatives of the MET were also invited to present to the PIURN Board the plan of the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu to create a national university on 1 January 2020. The government will amalgamate existing academic and training institutions into one whilst upgrading their level of qualification for their gradual integration into the national university.

The tentatively called National University of Vanuatu will be a bilingual university, offering academic programs both in English and French.

The representatives requested support from PIURN in developing bilingual academic programs.

A MoU would be developed between MET and PIURN to facilitate this request.



MET representative, Ms. Anne-Sophie Vixier (standing) outlining areas for support

PIURN Participation in the UN DESA coordinated Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway

The Third International Conference on SIDS was held in Apia, Samoa, in September 2014, with the overarching theme of “The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships”. Nearly 300 partnerships were announced at the conference and monitored through the Partnership Platform. PIURN continues to be one of the active partnerships, being invited to two meetings in 2018 (the Tonga and Samoa Partnership Dialogues, 21- 22 June, and 29 Oct, respectively) as part of the UN preparation towards the SAMOA PATHWAY High-Level Midterm Review to be held on 27 September 2019. In the dialogues, PIURN emphasis its strength and expertise in developing research proposals, seeking funding for the proposed projects from international funding organizations such as the European Commission’s Horizon 2020, and carrying out research and development for funded projects.

NEW PIURN BOARD LEADERSHIP

Due to the unfortunate situation surrounding the current Chairperson, Dr Albert Schram of UNITECH, the PIURN Board nominated new heads for PIURN to lead from 10 October 2018 – 10 October 2021.

- CHAIRMAN: Professor Derrick Armstrong, USP
- CO-CHAIRMAN: Dr. Gaël Lagadec, UNC
- DIRECTOR: Professor Jito Vanualailai, USP
- CO-DIRECTOR: Gwénaëlle Renaud, UNC

4th PIURN CONFERENCE 2020

The Solomon Islands National University delegates offered to host the 2020 conference. The PIURN Board conditionally agreed, with the understanding that SINU would submit to the Board the details of how they would finance and host the conference.



SINU delegates thanking the President of the University of French Polynesia, Dr. Patrick Capolsini, for a very successful 3rd PIURN Conference and vowing to host a better one in 2020.