The United Nations Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption (UN-PRAC) Project partnered with the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) at a joint commemorative event in Suva, on 9 December for International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD). FICAC, with UN-PRAC’s support, launched an unprecedented nation-wide, ‘I don’t accept bribes’ campaign.

As part of this campaign, the badge, which carries the words ‘I don’t accept bribes’, will be distributed to all civil servants (around 50,000) to wear in 2021. This will be complemented with comprehensive anti-bribery training programs throughout the country. The badge will serve as a symbol urging all civil servants to act with integrity and is a call to all Fijians to support the fight against bribery and corruption by not offering advantages to those who hold public office.

FICAC Deputy Commissioner Rashmi Aslam invited all civil servants to wear their ‘I don’t accept bribes’ badge with pride. “By wearing this, you are openly demonstrating your honesty and commitment to be transparent. Your courage to demonstrate the message will show your character and integrity,” he said.

“Today, the highest political leadership in Fiji is re-committing to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 and UNCAC implementation by launching a public sector wide, ‘I don’t accept bribes’ campaign to say a resolute ‘no’ to bribery!,” said Mr. Levan Bouadze, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Resident Representative during the event speaking on behalf of UNDP and UNODC, the two partners of UN-PRAC.

Mr. Bouadze also noted and commended that this initiative is fully aligned with the country’s commitment to achieve SDG Target 16.5 – to “substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms” and UNCAC’s articles 7 on the public sector and 15 on the active and passive forms of bribery of national public officials.

IACD was commemorated around the world on 9 December with the theme of ‘Recover with Integrity.’ The Suva event included messages from the President of Fiji, H.E. Major-General (Ret’d) Jioji Konusi Konrote, the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications, Honorable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Resident Representative Levan Bouadze, Australian Acting High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E. Anna Dorney and New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E. Jonathan Curr.
Pacific voice heard at first virtual IACC

As the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the world’s biggest biennial anti-corruption conference, the 19th International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC), from being held in South Korea in December, Pacific and other global advocates rose to the virtual challenge to make their integrity voices heard.

UN-PRAC ensured for the Pacific voice to be heard in this signature anti-corruption international event where all major stakeholders in the global fight against corruption regularly meet to discuss issues and explore solutions through an open exchange of views. UN-PRAC hosted two webinars on 3 and 4 December enabling Pacific Governments, CSOs, youth, the media and private sector stakeholders to speak out.

Youth As Game Changers in the Pacific, (at right), also featured the launch of UN-PRAC’s new youth video of the same name. In the Pacific Unity Against Corruption session (online Zoom shots below), participants, including the President of Kiribati, explored how Pacific Island countries remain committed to anti-corruption measures through a whole-of-society approach.

NZ working with UN-PRAC

A new Pacific-wide anti-corruption partnership was launched between the Government of New Zealand and UN-PRAC, in an effort to improve the livelihoods of people in 13 Pacific Island countries.

Valued at NZ$44 million, this new partnership will assist UN-PRAC to boost its anti-corruption and governance assistance for two and a half years. This support by the New Zealand Government is part of the broader NZ$24.7 million NZ UN Pacific Partnership which was launched in July.

UN-PRAC aims to promote and strengthen measures to prevent and fight corruption more efficiently and effectively in the Pacific. This includes supporting regional promotion of the Teieniwa Vision, which is a collective Pacific pledge to combat corruption.

The New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E. Jonathan Curr, said New Zealand wants to assist UN-PRAC to support the strengthening of anti-corruption legislation and policies. “New Zealand has committed to UN-PRAC as part of our support for our new UN-led programme to lift basic services, governance and gender equality,” said His Excellency Curr.

“This new partnership will assist UN-PRAC to help Pacific Island countries strengthen their broader governance frameworks in line with UNCAC and SDG16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions,” said UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser for the Pacific, Annika Wythes.

UNDP Anti-Corruption Adviser, Sonja Stefanovska-Trajanoska, said, “The partnership with New Zealand builds on the work UN-PRAC has achieved in the Pacific since 2012 through the continued support of the Australian Government.”
Right to Information remains critical to Pacific anti-corruption efforts

Recognizing the importance of promoting Right to Information (RTI) in the Pacific, UN-PRAC facilitated knowledge exchanges in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

A webinar on RTI was held in July for the PNG Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan (NAP) 2018-2020 FOI Technical Working Group (TWG).

“The presentations by speakers from Vanuatu, New Zealand and Australia have given clarity on some of the aspects that will need to be considered for PNG’s own RTI policy and legislation development,” said Yuambari Haihuie, Deputy Director, Transparency International PNG.

The workshop, which was opened by Flierl Shongol, OGP Freedom of Information Cluster Chair, aimed to:

- Take stock of drafting RTI legislation efforts in PNG, with a focus on lessons learned from other Pacific Island countries such as Vanuatu; and
- Strengthen the transparency and accountability of government services, drawing on its UNCAC review recommendations.

Following the FSM September webinar, the draft Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill was reviewed by UN-PRAC and experts from Australia and New Zealand.

FSM makes integrity advances in its VNR report

FSM undertook and published their Voluntary National Review (VNR) on their engagement with the SDGs during 2020.

In relation to Target 16.5, FSM reported it had become a State party to the UNCAC in 2012 and undertaken national initiatives since to strengthen the transparency and accountability of government services, drawing on its UNCAC review recommendations.

UN-PRAC has supported FSM over the past eight years on preventing and fighting corruption. In the last year, UN-PRAC supported FSM with its legislative and policy frameworks, notably developing a National Anti-Corruption Strategy and reviewing the draft FOI Bill and Whistleblower Protections Bill.

Korea agency takes on anti-corruption issues

In July 2020, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) invited UN-PRAC to present its work and also to discuss the anti-corruption challenges and solutions in Fiji.

The dialogue was also part of building the internal knowledge and capacities of KOICA staff on anti-corruption issues. KOICA was also interested how the role of civil society can be further improved and promoted in the fight against corruption.
The opening statement at September’s global meeting to progress preparations for the 2021 UN Special session of the General Assembly against corruption (UNGASS) was made by Kiribati President H.E. Taneti Maamau on 4 September.

The President called on Member States to ensure that the preparations produced a bold draft political statement that would lead to meaningful action against corruption following the June 2021 UNGASS.

Pacific Leaders and representatives adopted a groundbreaking Teieniwa Vision during the region’s first ever Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption Conference, hosted by Kiribati in February 2020.

Eleven (11) Pacific Island Forum country Leaders and representatives endorsed commitments that build on their national engagement with UNCAC and the SDGs. The Teieniwa Vision recognized the importance of strong leadership and building political will in order to address corruption.

As provided for in the Teieniwa Vision, “(w)e are committed to:
• Strengthen anti-corruption networks across the Pacific;
• Share knowledge, experiences and best practices on the subject; and
• Identify opportunities for regional cooperation and possible support by Development Partners towards implementation of national anti-corruption strategies and SDG 16,” President Maamau told the Vienna / virtual deliberations from his office in Kiribati.

The CSOs’ Statement to the 2020 Pacific Forum Economic Ministers Meeting in August reinforced support for the Teieniwa Vision. The CSOs’ statement says, “CSOs acknowledge the Teieniwa Vision that resulted from the Regional Anti-Corruption Meeting hosted by the Republic of Kiribati in February 2020 and emphasise its recognition of the importance of enhanced transparency and accountability, strengthening public awareness and the right to information.”
Pacific sports ready to tackle corruption and competition manipulation

Local Pacific sports and anti-corruption officials tackled the manipulation of sport competitions during a UNODC, INTERPOL and International Olympic Committee (IOC) two-day virtual workshop for Asia-Pacific in July.

Delivering the opening remarks, Annika Wythes stressed that the increasing interest in finding a way to strengthen the integrity of sport keeping with recent regional and international efforts taken to help address the problem, also now during COVID-19.

The virtual workshop brought together 250 registered participants from 18 countries in the Asia-Pacific region and served to highlight existing good practices and examples of how law enforcement, criminal justice authorities, sport organizations and related stakeholders could prevent, detect and sanction the manipulation of sport competitions. Participants from the Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were active in the workshop.

Participants also discussed how the resumption of sports competitions after COVID-19 will require extra preventive measures and vigilance. Placing the integrity of sport at the centre of any response is key to ensuring that sports emerge from this challenge as strong as possible.

Makarita Lenoa, Fiji National Olympic Committee (NOC) President, expressed her appreciation to the IOC, INTERPOL and UNODC and underlined that the workshop provided NOCs of the Pacific region with an opportunity to find out more about the risk of competition manipulations.

Samoa and Kiribati public service takes on misconduct training

Assisted by UN-PRAC, representatives of the Samoa Public Service Commission (PSC) in August and Kiribati Public Service Office (PSO) in December undertook briefings with the Australian APSC on the handling of misconduct, drawing on their resource guide for human resource managers, as part of a new partnership between the three PSCs.

Samoa’s representatives said that this partnership was beneficial to their own human resources capacity-building. Kiribati’s representatives welcomed the opportunity to learn about Code of Conduct legislation, policy and implementation in Australia, given Kiribati had only recently adopted a Code of Conduct in the Kiribati Public Service.

UN-PRAC and APSC will progress discussions with the two Pacific public service organizations and consider next steps.

Youth call for integrity against COVID-19

UN-PRAC supported International Youth Day at the University of the South Pacific on 13 August. UN-PRAC reinforced the need for Pacific youth to join the fight against corruption. The event was co-organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

“Grounded on integrity, governments and all development stakeholders must bring themselves to account for their actions and commitment, necessary in ensuring the safety and security of our Pacific communities from this pandemic,” said Tahere Talaina Siisialafaia, the Pacific Youth Council Chairperson.
Women’s Anti-Corruption Toolkit launched in Fiji

A new anti-corruption toolkit for women-owned, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Fiji, was launched in September by UN-PRAC to assist local women-owned businesses.

UN-PRAC produced this toolkit with the support of the Women Entrepreneurs Business Council (WEBC), the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF), Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission and FICAC.

“Women entrepreneurs not only play a crucial role in the community but also contribute positively to the national economy, WEBC is delighted to be collaborating with UN-PRAC to enable early detection and prevention of toxic conditions like corruption,” said the Chairwoman of WEBC, Eseta Nadakuitavuki.

The toolkit was developed after consultations were held with local Fiji women entrepreneurs on how to safeguard their businesses and not fall prey to corruption risks.

“This toolkit offers practical guidance on what constitutes corruption in Fiji, what laws and institutions are used to prevent and fight corruption, and who you can ask for help, in line with international best practice found in UNCAC and SDG16,” said Sonja Stefanovska-Trajanoska.

Implementation training for FCEF trainers was held in Fiji later in September and UN-PRAC has been asked to assist women entrepreneurs in other Pacific countries with similar capacity-building.

“Corruption can have a devastating impact on local business, arguably now more than ever during COVID-19, and this toolkit offers advice on how to protect your business from corrupt practices that women entrepreneurs identified,” said Annika Wythes.

Women in Solomons strive to foster integrity in business

Recognizing that inequality and corruption hinders national and local development efforts, over 30 businesswomen and men from the provinces of Solomon Islands have called for a united action from all business owners.

Local businesswomen called for gender awareness in fighting corruption, as they pledged to tackle corruption head-on at the business level, as it increases inequality and hinders national and local economic development.

Held over two days in November, the anti-corruption and integrity workshop was delivered by the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce (SICCI) and supported by UN-PRAC and UNDP Solomon Islands.

“Enhancing awareness about actions to fight bribery and to strengthen business compliance in high risk sectors is crucial,” a young businessman who runs a printing company in Auki, Malaita Province, Solomon Sisi said. The anti-corruption and integrity training was aimed at building the capacity of Solomon Islands business operators through strengthened internal control mechanisms, ethics and compliance, particularly of women-owned, and managed MSMEs.
**Integrity should not be for sale, says Solomon Islands youth entrepreneur**

“My integrity is not for sale at any price. [In the face of corruption], I value the moral high ground and zero dollars in the bank - we always have a choice!” said the Chair of the Youth Entrepreneurs Council Solomon Islands (YECSI), Millicent Barty (top right), as she reflected on her own experiences in Honiara in November.

Solomon Islands youth entrepreneurs have a key role to play in tackling corruption and building business integrity as the country strengthens its economy and tackles COVID-19, said local participants during their three-day Business Integrity for Youth Entrepreneurs Workshop.

The workshop by UN-PRAC and UNDP Solomon Islands encouraged collective action that opens dialogue with existing and potential young entrepreneurs in Solomon Islands on how they can do business with integrity to create a fair business environment with minimal risk of corruption and a level playing field for all.

Local tour operator, Patrick Aluta, welcomed sharing similar experiences and agreed that other budding youth entrepreneurs would benefit from a similar training. “Young entrepreneurs must learn to adapt integrity in business undertakings, uphold accepted business practices and be more meticulous in dealing with corruption,” said Mr. Aluta.

The workshop was based on the methodology contained in the “Business Integrity Toolkit for Young Entrepreneurs – How to set up and run your business with integrity”, a partnership between UNDP’s “Promoting a Fair Business Environment in ASEAN” and “Youth Co:Lab”. (Link at right)

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**Fiji youth call for principles to be put into practice**

Small business owner, Moira Solvalu Johns was impressed with the Savusavu workshop, as it focused on how small businesses can navigate what can be a blurry line between the public and private sectors.

The workshops were based on the methodology contained in the “Business Integrity Toolkit for Young Entrepreneurs – How to set up and run your business with integrity”. “Corruption hinders entrepreneurship and innovation in society. In this training, we are opening an important dialogue with existing and potential young entrepreneurs in Fiji on how they can do business with integrity. Opting for clear values and strong ethics can only raise the impact of their businesses in the market and bring more investors”, said Sonja Stefanovska-Trajanoska.

“**It is one thing to have personal principles about integrity and it is another matter to articulate policies in black and white so everyone knows what the boundaries are,**” shares Vice-Chair for Fiji Youth Entrepreneurs Council and owner of The Merch, Watisoni Nata (right).

Encouraging young people to start their own businesses in Fiji and operate with integrity from the outset was one of the key messages at a three-day Business Integrity for Youth Entrepreneurs Workshop hosted by UN-PRAC from 16-19 September in Nadi.

In response to COVID-19 in the Pacific, UN-PRAC has embraced the narrative of youth as game changers and influencers with the capability to lead the new normal in this current COVID-19 era and beyond. UN-PRAC facilitated the workshop in Nadi (above) and another workshop in Savusavu in late October, also with FCFE.
Kiribati Parliament moves on webinar governance training

UN-PRAC assisted the UNDP Effective Governance team to undertake the induction training for Kiribati’s Parliamentarians after their mid-year election.

This is the third post-election induction that UN-PRAC has helped deliver since Kiribati acceded to UNCAC in 2013.

At the training, the Speaker of the Kiribati House of Assembly, Tangariki Reete, acknowledged the importance of the induction as a programme that will enable MPs to carry out their roles more efficiently with an emphasis on integrity, accountability and transparency.

Speaker Reete is also the first female in the history of Kiribati to be elected Speaker of the Kiribati House of Assembly. In the Pacific, the Kiribati Parliament is currently the second legislature to have a woman Presiding Officer, and therefore represents a positive change and an inspiration for other parliaments in the region.

Solomons youth take a refresher

In September, UN-PRAC joined Pacific Youth Forum Against Corruption Solomon Islands Chapter (PYFAC SI) and local youth on a refresher to gauge how young people are advocating for anti-corruption, key challenges and what are some of their achievements.

Human rights, corruption, private sector in the mix

UN-PRAC joined OHCHR on 1 December at the 1st UN Pacific Forum on Business and Human Rights to facilitate a session on the corruption impact on business and human rights issues and case studies relevant to the Pacific.

Anita Ramasastry, Chair of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, said corruption was putting lives at risk. "When a business pays a bribe to side step an environmental or other kind of impact assessment ... that leads to significant harm," she said.

"Whether that is a health issues, increased pollution, safety issues, dams collapsing and killing people because corruption led to no inspections."

UN Convention against Corruption in the Pacific

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacific States parties to UNCAC</th>
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<td>Vanuatu</td>
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