

SPECIAL EVENT

MAKING SDG 16 COUNT IN THE PACIFIC

**8 November 2017, 9 a.m. - 10.30 a.m.
CONFERENCE ROOM M06**

Session plan and talking points delivered by Chair: Mr. John Brandolino, Director, Division for Treaty Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

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It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this special event. We are honoured to have His Excellency the President of Kiribati with us today. I also acknowledge the distinguished panelists from different Pacific countries.

As Pacific countries strengthen their commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, the importance of SDG 16's focus on justice, anti-corruption and accountability is seen as a key to genuine implementation of all of the SDGs. Today, we are going to discuss how Pacific countries, and beyond, can more effectively implement the UN Convention against Corruption and work towards the achievement of SDG 16.

We are looking at this issue from two main angles:

First, this session will highlight the need to build integrity and prevent corrupt practices in public institutions and the public service. This is crucial considering the severe impact of corruption on the efficiency of public services, citizens' confidence in public institutions, and the cost of public transactions. In small countries with overburdened administrations, the effectiveness and integrity of the public sector is key.

Secondly, the people in the Pacific, probably more than anywhere else, know that the world is facing daunting environmental challenges. This issue is on the world's agenda this and next week as our colleagues in Bonn are trying to find sustainable solutions to tackle it. Unfortunately, it is clear that corrupt practices in many parts of the world have contributed to these environmental challenges. This special event therefore discusses possibilities to strengthen governance systems in external industries in order to protect environment and livelihoods of small island developing States (SIDS); and the need to improve anti-corruption frameworks to strengthen and build resilience of SIDS against the consequences of climate change.

As you know, Sustainable Development Goal 16 is dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels. This Goal includes the explicit target of substantially reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms.

Today we will hear why SDG 16 counts in the Pacific. But there is also another important element, namely how we will count – how we will measure – the implementation of SDG 16 in the Pacific and other SIDS. In two weeks time, in Fiji, UNODC and UNDP are jointly hosting the Pacific Regional Workshop on monitoring SDG 16. The workshop will enable representatives of National Planning Departments, Statistical Offices, as well as institutions focused on anti-corruption, rule of law and access to justice, to share their experiences and challenges in integrating SDG 16 targets and indicators in their national policies and in producing data for these indicators. Participants will discuss the existing methodologies to measure global indicators, and also present experiences and find common avenues on the development of regional and national related indicators. We all look forward to the outcome of that event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNCAC and Goal 16 are building blocks for an effective anti-corruption framework, but the political will and leadership of countries is also fundamental to achieving a future where no-one is left behind, particularly in the Pacific and other SIDS. Pacific countries have demonstrated leadership through many powerful national initiatives and also on the international stage, such as by taking the lead in the negotiations of a resolution on strengthening the implementation of UNCAC in small island developing States.

In this context, I would also like to highlight the importance of partnerships. Jointly, UNODC and UNDP currently implement the UN Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption project, with support from the Australian Government. UN-PRAC aims to help Pacific Island countries fight corruption by supporting:

- 1) Ratification of the Convention. (There are now 12 States parties from the Pacific, as Niue acceded to the Convention on 3 October 2017, becoming the latest State party);
- 2) Engagement in the UNCAC processes, such as the Implementation Review Mechanism;
- 3) UNCAC implementation through stronger polices, laws, measures and institutional frameworks in line with SDG16; and
- 4) Social accountability and involvement of all sectors of society.