

Niue National Assessment Report

on

STRATEGIC

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

July 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Niue is very small in terms of geography and population in global sense. Since its self-governing status was attained in 1974, the island has pursued the economic development dream in search of economic prosperity, self sufficiency and less reliance on foreign assistance from various donors. The use of development plans have assisted the island by guiding the use of limited resources in areas that were identified to provide maximum benefits for the Niuean people.

This assessment looked at various aspects of Niue's development, its priorities and strategies to achieve its long term goals. While the focus was to determine whether sustainable development is practiced or featured in the development plans, the assessment also looked at the degree of coherence and consistency of policies at the national level, community and the international arena as well as the level of consultation and/or public participation in the decision making process. The assessment found that there is consistency and coherence with respect to policies. With respect to public participation, there is a need for increase involvement of major groups to ensure that the "checks and balances" are in place with respect to Niue's development.

The lack of funding and limited human resource capacity have hindered the development efforts of Niue. Funding is required for improvement in the level of infrastructure to cater for further development particularly in the agriculture and tourism sectors and access to such will ensure that development will be sustainable. Furthermore, more people are required to participate and assist towards the development of the country. The irony of this is that although there is a growing concern over the continuing decline in its population, the small population may be Niue's saving grace in terms of slowing the level of development to the pace that is suitable for Niue's environment and precious resources and limited services.

1. Background and Introduction

Niue is reputed to be the world's largest and highest single coral atoll. It is situated in the Southwest Pacific Ocean, at latitude 19 degrees south and 169 degrees west, approximately 480 kilometers east of Tonga, 930 kilometers west of Cook Islands (Rarotonga) and 660 kilometers southeast of Samoa. Niue has a land area of approximately 259 square kilometers, and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 39,000 square kilometers, including two reef atolls, Antiope and Beveridge, which are visible only on low tide.

Niue became a British protectorate in 1900, following a number of petitions submitted to Queen Victoria. In 1901, Niue was annexed to New Zealand and was governed by a succession of Resident Commissioners until 1974 when the island became self governed with free association with New Zealand.

The Niue Constitution entered into force on 19th October 1974. Under this Constitution, Niue has full control over its domestic and external affairs. The legislative power rests in the democratically elected Niue Assembly (Fono Ekepule). As a consequence of the Niue Constitution Act 1974 (NZ) and the Citizenship Act 1977 (NZ), persons born in Niue or descendents from persons born in Niue are New Zealand citizens and have a right to a New Zealand passport. As New Zealand citizens, Niueans have the right of free entry to and from New Zealand and they enjoy the same rights as all New Zealand citizens.

Niue is self-governing in free association with New Zealand and it is possibly the world's smallest self-governing country. It is a democratic island, governed by the Niue Assembly. The Assembly is comprised of 20 members; one member representing each of the 14 villages, and 6 members from the common roll.

The head of government is the Premier who is elected by the Assembly at its first meeting after a general election or whenever the office of the Premier is vacant. General elections are held every three years. The executive power of Niue is exercised by Cabinet, which is comprised of the Premier and three other members of the Assembly selected by Premier.

Niue is highly dependent on New Zealand for financial assistance. This assistance subsidizes a very small revenue stream collected from tax and other sources such as fishing licenses and import duties. Other bilateral donors include Australia, European Union, and People's Republic of China for example, and international organizations such as the UNDP and FAO have also contributed to Niue's development.

Like other small island states in the Pacific, Niue continues to make every effort towards developing its economy that would ultimately lead to achieving self sufficiency. These efforts are reflected in its development priorities and strategies that Niue have introduced over the years. Unfortunately, development progress has been marred by a number of factors which include but not limited to natural disasters, mainly cyclones and

droughts, the continual population decline over the last 30 – 40 years, and its heavy reliance on foreign aid.

This report is prepared as part of the requirement for developing a National Strategy for Sustainable Development for Niue. Its purpose is to provide an assessment of the priorities, strategies and indicators currently available at the national level in so far as development is concern. The assessment examines whether the current priorities and strategies are consistent with the current thinking or strategies at the global level.

2. Niue's Development Priorities and Targets

A number of national development plans have been developed to assist or guide Niue's economic development over the years and the *Halavaka ke he Monuina – The Road to Prosperity* - Niue Integrated Strategic Plan 2003 – 2008 (NISP) was produced for the same purpose. The NISP 2003 – 2008 was developed shortly before the Cyclone Heta hit Niue in January 2004. However, immediately after Cylone Heta, the NISP was revised specifically to address and facilitate some of the immediate needs due to the devastation of Cyclone Heta. A revised version was necessary being the blueprint for the discussions at the Donors' meeting (pers comm, C Tatui) with the Niue Government in mid 2004. This meeting was very important in so far as Niue's recovery from the devastation caused by Cylone Heta is concern, and the continual survival of the small island following the reduction in the New Zealand bilateral aid over the last five to ten years. Thus, the current NISP was prepared to highlight the key areas that Niue would like to address from 2003 to 2008 (pers comm, Talagi-Lines). The current plan is due for its mid term review and this is anticipated to take place before the end of 2006.

Given the urgency of which the current NISP was prepared, it is not surprising that the content was a bit different from the previous plans. For example, there are no clear priority area(s) but rather, a set of strategic objectives to facilitate development was highlighted. These key strategic objectives are:

1. Financial Stability: Ensure there are sufficient financial resources to manage and develop the country in a responsible and sustainable manner;
2. Governance: Provide governance that is stable, transparent and accountable;
3. Economic Development: Maximise benefits from Niue's resources in a sustainable manner;
4. Social: Enjoying a lifestyle of a thriving, educated and healthy community that has access to a wider range of quality social infrastructure, service and development opportunities; and
5. Environment: Sustainable management of Niue's natural resources for future generation.

(Source: Niue Integrated Strategic Plan 2003 – 2008, Government of Niue)

Alongside these strategic objectives, a set of guiding principles were highlighted to guide the development initiatives. These principles are as follows:

- Sustainable development
- A strategic focus and alliances with key stakeholders
- Collaboration, communication and consultation
- Accountability, responsibility and transparency
- Cohesive and coordinated implementation of the strategic objectives
- Action focused and mindful of cultural and spiritual values
- Relevant to Niue ke Monuina – A prosperous Niue
- Consistent monitoring and review.

(Source: Niue Integrated Strategic Plan 2003 – 2008, Government of Niue)

Although sustainable development is highlighted in the plan as one of the key guiding principles, this is not sufficient to ensure that sustainable development will be achieved. Furthermore, there is no reference to the various conventions or the global efforts concerning the drive for sustainable development such as the 2002 Johannesburg World Earth Summit and/or the 1992 Rio Declaration.

The current vision calls for “A Prosperous Niue – *Niue ke Monuina*”. While this vision is simple and clear, it is also very broad. That is, it is highly likely that the end results may not be so prosperous if economic development is pursued without due consideration of other aspects such as the social and the environment impacts of the development project. One alarming example of such conflicting or narrow focus is the establishment of the fish processing plant, Niue Fish Processor Ltd, a joint venture between the Government and a New Zealand company, Reef Group. When initial discussions took place between the parties, the primary focus was on economic development with very little consideration on the potential detrimental impact on the environment and social impacts that the development may result. Although a socio-economic assessment was prepared, the report was not considered for some unknown reasons however it is believed this is due mainly to the fact that the report was prepared after the venture was already in place. There was also an indication that the outcomes of the assessment will be featured in the Niue Tuna Fishing Management and Development Plan (pers comm, J Tamate and B Pasisi). To date, more efforts have been made to safeguard the investment and development but these were due mainly to the public outcry from key lobby groups such as the Niue Fishermen’s Association and the *Vaka*¹ Association.

The national development vision is bolded in the NISP 2003 – 2008 document and while this is clear and simple, the vision statement is a bit distorted and very long. The

¹ Canoe

statement appear to set out the goals and targets that Niue would like to achieve through its development efforts however it is not clear-cut and interpretation will depend on individuals and how they regard the vision. In essence, the vision statement is like a long-winded dream that will be realized when the strategic objectives are achieved.

Reference to sustainable development is implicit through the following quote: “Niue will be recognized internationally for its unspoiled and unique environment, particularly its pristine coastal waters. It will protect that environment through sustainable environmental practices such as a managed fishery and organic farming” (NISP 2003 – 2008, pg 3). In all fairness, one could argue that there is an underlying assumption that sustainability is fundamental for the achievement of the vision for a prosperous Niue and that the priority areas/sectors are tourism, vanilla and nonu farming, fisheries and private sector development. All three sectors are expected to contribute towards a thriving private sector. Interestingly, these sectors were not explicitly outlined in the vision statement or the goals but in the foreword by the following quote:

Vanilla, fishing and tourism are targeted for special attention as it is seen that they have the potential to create employment and contribute cash. However, it is stressed that they will not be promoted at the expense of traditional (subsistence) crops or fishing and we will continue to look for other cash crops.

(Source: NISP 2003 – 2008, pg 3)

There is an urgent concern regarding Niue's declining population below 2000 and approaching the 1,500 mark. The population peaked at 5,194 in 1966, and began to decline thereafter (Niue Statistics 2006). This decline was accelerated with the opening of Hanan International Airport, which enabled Niueans to travel more easily compared to the 1950s when people had to travel by ship to catch a connecting flight from American Samoa or Fiji to New Zealand.

Niue's population declined below 2000 in 1999, when there were only 1,913 people on the island, compared to 2,088 two years earlier in 1997. The 2001 census showed the population to be 1,788 persons (Niue Statistics 2001). A headcount of the population undertaken in September 2004, eight months after Cyclone Heta estimated the population to be 1,761 persons. At the end of 2005, Niue's population was estimated to be at 1,730 (Niue Statistics, 2006). There are approximately 20,000 Niueans or Niuean by descent living in New Zealand, with an increasing number now living in Australia.

Thus, given the continual decline, population retention and development have become a key area if not the main priority for the Government of Niue. This position is made through the call by the Premier for the Niuean people to return, a \$2million project specifically to address issues and concerns regarding population and the need to address labor shortage by importing foreign labor. These positions are reflected in a number of public speeches by the Premier and the outcomes of the recent Joint Consultative Group (JCG)² meeting between the New Zealand Government and Niue Government in March 2006. A project document is being drafted for consideration of

² This group is responsible for the implementation of key projects funded by the New Zealand Aid under the Memorandum of Understanding between the two Governments. A population retention and development concept paper was presented at the March 2006 meeting and the group agreed to earmark \$2 million dollars to address issues concerning population development for Niue (pers comm., J.Tamate).

the New Zealand Government and it is anticipated that a population policy and strategy will be drafted to address the many issues relating to this problem (pers comm. C.Tatui and J.Tamate).

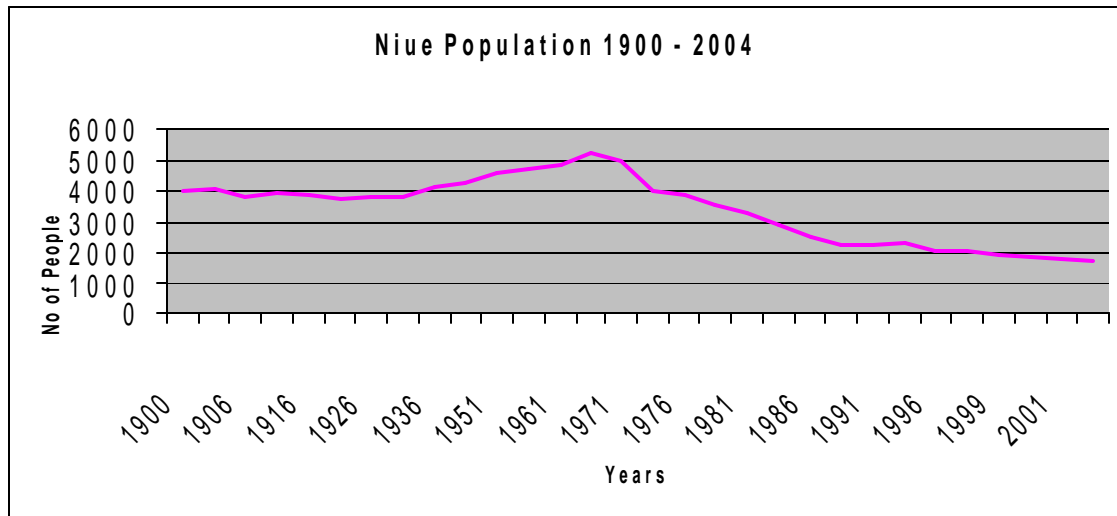


Figure 1: Niue Population Estimates 1900 - 2004. Source: Niue Statistics and www.niuestats.com

Basically, Niue’s priority development areas are identified in response to the current needs and concerns of the country. For example, the potential for tourism development and using eco-tourism as its key product, the vanilla and nonu under organic farming practices through the low capital requirements, and fishing, as an area that have yet to be tapped into but events in the international and regional arena makes it strategic to invest in the fishing industry, in particular the tuna fishery.

Effectively, given the open ended national development goal is to promote private sector development, one could argue that the Government will continue to look or facilitate investments in all areas that would boost private sector development and are beneficial for the local people; perhaps at the short term only. The recent investment interest to log trees is an example of such where Government is involved in facilitating economic activity by entering into a joint venture with a foreign investor to use the logged trees to produce hard-wood furniture. Understandably, the investment had met with a lot of resistance from the public, particularly the potential environmental degradation that the logging activity would produce, and more so the fact that Niue’s landmass is extremely small in a global sense with its terrain mainly rugged.

3. Strategies

The NISP 2003 – 2008 sets out the national strategic objectives for Niue’s development. This document is regarded as the “bible” for Niue’s development and the various sectors are required to develop their individual strategic or action plans to be in line with the national objectives. These sector plans basically set out their goals and targets

with reference to the current NISP. For example, the Niue National Youth Policy 2003 – 2008 is based on the reference in the vision statement: “to enjoy a lifestyle of a thriving, educated and healthy community that has access to a wide range of quality social infrastructure, services and development opportunities”. The focus of the policy is on empowering young people and thus adds to the development of the country. However, in reality, much of the focus is on strengthening the institution and the youth contribute very little towards the development activities or even consulted to some extent in so far as development projects are concerned (pers comm. F Akesi and R Hekau).

The Tourism Strategic Plan 2005 – 2015 did not make specific reference to the NISP however, given that tourism is regarded as one of the key development areas for Niue, one may argue that there is no need to link or make reference between the two documents because the Tourism Strategic Plan is clearly supporting the strategic objectives of the NISP as well as the guiding principles. Basically, the tourism strategic plan focus was on the goals and activities that need to be undertaken to facilitate growth in the sector. One thing that stands out from this plan is that it highlighted the need to address the infrastructure constraints such as the sewage system, water, and energy usage. Clearly, the plan stated that although the basic infrastructures are available, there is a need to address the various limitations. One other key feature was the comments of the Manager for Niue Power suggesting that the proposed accommodation units need to be fitted with alternative energy facilities such as solar heating and LPG cooking facilities. This suggestion is based on the relatively high demand on the diesel powered electricity for the island with limited capacity to cope with additional demand from the potential new accommodation units to boost tourism development (Niue Tourism Office (Tourism Strategic Plan), pg 35).

Currently, Niue does not have a national sustainable development strategy and there are no intentions of developing one to comply with the international requirements or understanding (pers comm. Talagi-Lines). This is because too many plans or strategies may take away precious capacity from areas that are crucial for the overall development of Niue. Essentially, what Niue requires is one national development plan that could address all the concerns and needs of the country while ensuring their sustainability. This viewpoint is supported by one of the outcomes from the Pacific Workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategy that was held in early May 2006, New York.

The current NISP is focused on national priorities with little reference to the regional or international requirements and obligations on sustainable development. Reference to global responsibilities is under the environment objective which encourages Niue’s participation in international environment programs to assist in meeting its global environmental responsibilities and in seeking international assistance in implementing sound environment policy (NISP 2003 – 2008, pg 10).

The NISP 2003 – 2008 has high level recognition and reference have been made to it however ownership is an issue as the grass-root level does not have any part in its development. This is reflected by the comments from the various civil society groups.

4. Coherence among strategies, related policies and legislations

4.1 Horizontal Coherence

A number of sector plans are currently in place or are under development. Current sector plans include the Tourism Strategic Plan 2005 – 2015 and Education Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010. A draft National Tuna Fishery Management and Development Plan is under consideration (pers comm. B. Pasisi) as well as a number of annual corporate plans of various Government departments. These corporate plans set out the work programs of the departments with reference to the NISP 2003 – 2008.

Given Niue's circumstances and level of development, it is difficult to ascertain whether there are prioritized sector plans as all of them are equally important for the economic development of the island (pers comm. Talagi-Lines). However, as Niue has been promoting private sector development for a long time through its numerous attempts to become self sufficient and ease off the heavy reliance on foreign aid, it is presumed that this is the priority area for Niue and will continued to be pursued irrespective of the sector. That is, as long as investment proposals and developments will be in support of private sector, there is a guarantee that they will receive favorable treatment by the Government/Cabinet. However, realistically, with the dwindling population base, efforts towards these aspirations may not be forthcoming.

The key development sectors are perceived to be tourism, agriculture and fishing. The positive outcomes of these sectors will contribute to the growth of Niue's private sector.

(i) Tourism Sector

The tourism sector rightly deserves its support because of the potential returns for the whole economy. Thus, it is not surprising that efforts and finance continues to be poured into facilitating and promoting growth of the sector. To date, growth in the sector has been slow and this was due mainly to the unreliable air services to the island have endured over the last 10 – 15 years. For example, Air Nauru provided very cheap airfares to New Zealand from the late 1980s to mid 1990s until it experienced financial difficulties and the services were cancelled. Royal Tongan Airlines took over the provision of air services for Niue from late 1995 and saw a steady increase in the number of visitors to the island in the initial period but subsequent decline as time goes by. Unfortunately, the airline also experienced financial difficulties and the services were also initially downsized from direct jet services from Auckland, New Zealand to feeder/island hopper services from Tonga. Polynesian Airlines took over the provision of air services for Niue to and from New Zealand in late 2002 but this was later terminated in late 2005 due to financial difficulties. Under the operations of Polynesian Airlines, annual visitor numbers peaked at nearly 4,000 in 2003 and then declined following the devastation caused by Cyclone Heta in January 2004. Table 1 below provides a summary of passengers arriving Niue from 1988 to 2004.

Table 1: Summary of passengers arriving Niue, 1988 - 2004

| Year/Month | Holiday/ Vacation | Business/ Official Conf. | Visit Friends/ Relatives | Other | Total |
|------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1988 | 31 | 63 | 255 | 12 | 361 |
| 1989 | 81 | 160 | 184 | 56 | 481 |
| 1990 | 169 | 154 | 283 | 43 | 649 |
| 1991 | 252 | 251 | 438 | 52 | 993 |
| 1992 | 668 | 366 | 479 | 155 | 1668 |
| 1993 | 1334 | 299 | 1352 | 373 | 3358 |
| 1994 | 1527 | 334 | 851 | 44 | 2756 |
| 1995 | 1021 | 503 | 514 | 122 | 2160 |
| 1996 | 733 | 364 | 327 | 98 | 1522 |
| 1997 | 810 | 534 | 317 | 159 | 1820 |
| 1998 | 974 | 374 | 350 | 65 | 1763 |
| 1999 | 885 | 461 | 397 | 47 | 1790 |
| 2000 | 986 | 571 | 365 | 89 | 2011 |
| 2001 | 788 | 354 | 259 | 145 | 1546 |
| 2002 | 1158 | 437 | 381 | 108 | 2084 |
| 2003 | 1400 | 439 | 657 | 210 | 2706 |
| 2004 | 723 | 783 | 681 | 363 | 2550 |

Source: Niue Statistics website, www.niuestats.com

Air New Zealand commenced services to Niue for the first time in November 2005 and traffic has been good. It is in Niue's interest to ensure that traffic numbers for this service continues to be consistent or high in order for the airline to continue flying, the tourism sector to develop and grow which would subsequently stimulate further growth in other sectors. However, how Niue will react to the increase in visitor numbers in terms of the increase demand in infrastructure such as sewage system and energy usage will be interesting. Although this concern has been highlighted in its Strategic Plan, past practice have indicated that specific funding from the appropriate sector (eg Energy/Power sector) will be responsible for ensuring this and not a by-product of the development in the actual sector (ie tourism sector). That is, unless there is a renewable energy or alternative energy program in the energy sector, the push for the use or the actual adoption of these in the tourism sector for example will be difficult if they are to be implemented immediately. Similarly, just as important, some mechanism must be in place ensuring the uniqueness of Niue's with its pristine waters, quietness and hospitable people including its vibrant and lively culture and social structure is not neglected or spoil by the industry.



Alofi Coastline – one year after Cyclone Heta

(ii) Agriculture Sector

The Agricultural sector is also a very important for the development of Niue. As the sector is one of the primary or traditional sectors in any developing country, it is not surprising that Niue adopt this sector as one of the key development sectors. Over the years, Niue have looked at various products from the production of lime and passionfruits in the 1960s to 1970s, to coconut cream in the 1980s, taro in the 1990s through the establishment of the *Moui Faka-Niue Programme*, and most recently vanilla and nonu farming. To tap into the current trend, emphasis has been placed on organic farming practices for both vanilla and nonu farming in order to capture the high value market. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and the Niue Organic Farming Association (NIOFA) have been promoting this aspect and hence, it has become a widely accepted practice by farmers (pers comm. B. Pasisi and A. Pavihi). Niue has commenced exporting these products to the international markets and promoted them as organically grown. The interests and the demand have been significant however there are problems with consistently supplying the volume required by the market (pers comm. A. Pavihi).



Nonu fruit
Photos courtesy of Niu Tauevihi



Vaiea Nonu Farm – Approximately 18 months

However, on the other side of the coin, a high number of herbicides and synthetic fertilizers have been and are still being used heavily primarily for the farming of Niue's traditional and staple food crop, taro³. Over the last 20 years, the traditional methods of farming taro have changed dramatically and this change has made a huge impact on every Niuean family in terms of simplicity and convenience. For example, the traditional slash and burn method has been discarded by the hiring of a bulldozer to clear the land areas for the taro plantations⁴. Furthermore, the weeks of weeding have been replaced by few hours by the use of weed killer spraying; and the taro growth has been boosted with the use of synthetic fertilizers. The taro crop takes approximately nine (9) to ten (10) months to mature so on going maintenance such as weeding is inevitable and hence the ongoing use of herbicides and pesticides throughout the period.

In recent years, there has been an outcry of concern on the impact of land clearing through the use of bulldozers on Niue's biodiversity and the potential adverse effect on the water lenses through the continuing use of synthetic fertilizers and weed killers. However, despite the outcry, nothing concrete has been put in place to alleviate the problem. Of course the exception is NIOFA which is at the forefront advocating and lobbying for the ban of the importation of herbicides and fertilizers. The other farmers, whom incidentally are of larger numbers, have agreed to reduce the usage provided that effective substitutes are available on the market (pers comm. A Pavihi). Again, Niue's small population has made the current farming practices sustainable to a certain extent. Perhaps the public health concerns for its population's poor diet and bad eating habits due to the consumption of taro may reduce the number of taros and plantations in the future (per comm..M Pulu). Although there is no guarantee of this happening as taro farming is predominantly embedded in the Niuean lifestyle and their grassroots. However, taro continue to be an important cash crop as its people continue to export it to New Zealand.

(iii) Fishing Sector

With respect to the fishing sector, Niue does not boast the abundance of fishery resource like its cousins in the north. However, this has not prevented Niue from wanting to pursue the potential revenue from the sector.

Formerly, Niue has depended on bilateral fishing fees from foreign fishing boats operating in its exclusive economic zone, however, with the establishment of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Niue have closed its waters to foreign fishing activities under bilateral fishing access arrangement (with the exception of the US Treaty fishing vessels) and encouraging the participants to base their operations in the island (pers comm. B. Pasisi). Basically, this is a strategic move in

³ The taro crop may be regarded as the only surviving cash crop throughout the years primarily as it is a traditional crop with important customary value – *mana*. It is predominantly being used for feasts by families, communities and important national celebrations.

⁴ Currently, the bulldozer clearing would be, on the average per farmer, roughly half acre to an acre within a span of half an hour to one hour. More depending on one's future plans. The bulldozer would move from village to village at about 4-6 months per visit.

order to build up a catch history to be used when allocation or catch quotas are negotiated at the Commission level.

The opening of the fishing processing factory, a joint venture between Government of Niue and Reef Group⁵, further validate this provision. To ensure the viability of the venture, it is the Government's interest to encourage growth in the sector and the closing of its EEZ to bilateral fishing operations, particularly longline fishing operations is to encourage the participants to land their fish on Niue and subsequently supply the raw material requirements of the plant (pers comm. J.Tamate).

4.1.1 Inter-dependent linkages

There is a number of important inter-dependent linkages between sectors with respect to projects and developments, and Government have addressed these linkages through the establishment of steering committees or working groups particularly where relatively large projects are involved. These committees are effective in terms of projects outputs however there is still a lot of room for improvement in so far as development projects are concerned such as the logging for example, as clearly the focus is on economic development with very little or no input from other sectors such as the environment and forestry for example (pers comm. S.Tongatule).

The Climate Change Project is an excellent example of collaboration between various sectors through the composition and the membership of the various working groups where it combined the relevant and different technical expertise to address issues of concern. While this project may not be developmental in nature, it demonstrates the current practice to involve people from different sectors to progress the work under various projects. This grouping or cooperation between sectors is essential for Niue particularly with the limited capacity available and the urgency required to progressing the projects in terms of implementation and meeting deadlines set out by donors. On the other hand, it does have negative effect with sector representatives promoting their own interest rather than promoting the broader picture on certain issues.

4.1.2 Legislation and Policy Coherence

In terms of legislation and policy coherence, each sector has its respective policies and some with legislation that facilitates its functions and asserts its boundaries where certain issues are concerned. There does not appear to be any contradictions in the current practices. However, decision makers being human beings, it is the norm for certain provisions to be overlooked, particularly if high level priority is placed on the developmental aspects with environmental concerns ignored. This is contradictory with the NISP where it emphasized the need to ensure that the environment is protected – “they will also not be promoted at the cost of our environment” (NISP 2003 – 2008, pg 2).

⁵ A New Zealand registered company.

environmental policy and law, establish an Environment Department, and provide enforcement powers for environment officers.

The Act takes into consideration the following;

- The maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment;
- The efficient use and development of natural and physical resources;
- The concept of sustainable development;
- The protection of the water lens from contamination;
- The protection of indigenous flora and indigenous fauna and their habitats;
- The protection of the coastal zone from inappropriate use and development;
- The protection of historic areas from inappropriate use and development;
- The relationship of Niueans and their culture and traditions to their lands and historic areas;
- The conservation and sustainable use of biological resources;
- The compliance to multilateral environment agreements Niue is a party to.

The Environment Act in itself is a general multipurpose act designed to be constantly reviewed and updated by additional regulations where deemed appropriate by Government.

Water Resources Act 1996 (includes the responsibility of Village Councils): Aims to ensure the optimum development and use of Niue's water resources; the coordination of all activities which may influence the quality, quantity, distribution, use and management of water; the application of appropriate standards and techniques for investigation, use, control, protection, management and administration of water resources; and the proper disposal of any water products that could pollute water.

There are currently no regulations in place to enforce the Water Resources Act, and are unlikely to be instigated in the near future due to the financial constraints associated with the enforcement of the regulations.

Mining Act 1997: Provides Cabinet with the authority to grant and regulate the granting of prospecting licenses. It includes a provision determining that the area of land in a mining lease shall not exceed 40 acres and the length of the area, as far as practical, shall not exceed twice its width.

Land Ordinance 1969: includes a provision to allow the court, on application of any *leveki magafaoa* and with the consent and the majority of the members, to set aside any Niuean land for a reserve, fishing ground, village site, land place, place of historical interest, water supply, church site, building site, recreation ground, bathing place or any other specified purpose.

Village Council Ordinance 1967: Includes identification of the function of Village Councils to undertake, provision, construct and maintain, manage and regulate in the following sustainable land management areas –

- Bush roads (except public roads)
- Public parks, gardens, recreation areas, scenic resorts and lookouts and other public places, reserves and land vested in the Council or placed under the control either permanent or temporary
- Establishment and maintenance of forest plantation and natural forest reserves
- Agricultural, horticultural and forestry industries and the economic use of Niuean Customary land
- Protection of fish resources, flora and fauna.

Niue National Forest Policy:

Endorsed by Government in December 2000 and receives funding and technical support from SPC and GTZ.

The overall aim is for the conservation and sustainable use of the remaining forest areas on Niue. The objectives listed below outlined in Niue's Forest Policy also address land degradation and sustainable land use and include:

- Promoting the sustainable use of Niue's indigenous forest and assisting communities to manage these as a renewable resource;
- Supporting customary conservation practices and community-based conservation areas;
- Promoting integrated land use practices to reduce the need to clear more forest;
- Developing a sustainable local timber industry; and
- Promoting plantation forestry within communities with emphasis on indigenous species and agro-forestry.

A number of legislations that supports the concept of sustainable development exists in Niue and they include the Domestic Fishing and other related fishing legislations and regulations, Environment Act 2003, the Water Resource Act 1996 to name only a few.

The following excerpts on some of the relevant legislations are extracted from the National National Action Plan for Addressing land degradation and drought (Nemaia, 2005 pg 28-29).

Where limitations or contradictions have been identified in particular legislations, assistance is available to address by reviewing the relevant legislation to facilitate development and sustainability. To date, assistance has been made available under the New Zealand Aid funded project on legislative review and other organizations such as FAO and UNDP (pers comm. C.Tatui).

The National Assessment Report prepared for the World Summit in 2002 provided an excellent assessment of the various limitations and potential conflicts between legislations and policies in so far as sustainable development is concerned. Progress in addressing the concerns highlighted in this assessment report is relatively poor and thus the same conclusions are applied to the current situation. The lack of capacity and know-how are largely responsible for this poor progress.

4.2 Vertical Coherence

4.2.1 National level

In terms of adopting and implementing national policies at the community level, anecdotal evidence indicated that there is consistency between the two levels. It is presumed the smallness of the island and the relatively low population may be instrumental in ensuring this consistency. As the national Government provides grants or facilitates funding for community projects, the consistency is not accidental but perhaps designed.

The Village Councils are largely responsible for developments at the community level. Under the guidance of the village council, there are smaller groups such as the women's group, youth and the various sport code groups. The Village Council is deemed the central body of each community and represents its views and concerns at the national level. However, membership of Village Councils, consist mainly of public servants plus other over committed people. Therefore finding time to do Village Council work is always demanding.

4.2.2 Regional and International level

With respect to the linkage with the various conventions, agreements and/or strategies at the international arena, the Government is largely responsible for ensuring consistency of policies. The Offices of the External Affairs and the Secretary to Government of the Premier's Department are responsible for this as well as the key focal points for each of the conventions (pers comm. C Tatui).

Niue is actively committed to a number of conventions that advocate for the protection of the global environment (see Table 2). Due to the small population of Niue, public awareness campaigns are effective and far reaching with the overall population becoming aware of Environmental Conventions and its implications such as the

Convention of Climate Change, International Waters Project, Convention on Biological Diversity, Persistent Organic Pollutants in Pacific Island Countries, to name a few. These are often integrated in some form into the school curricular activities, which is a positive step for awareness and the future of Niue's unique environment and its sustainable use.

Niue's Commitment to International Environmental Conventions and Regional Environmental Treaties

| Convention | Date Signed | Focal Department |
|--|---|---|
| Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, 2000 | Signed 30 Oct 2000 Ratified 17 Dec 2003 | Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries |
| Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific, 1989, Wellington (Wellington Convention) | Ratified April 1997 | Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries |
| Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, 1986 Noumea (SPREP Convention) | Ratified 3 May 1990 | Department of Environment |
| South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, Rarotonga, 1985 | Signed 12 May 1986 | Office for External Affairs |
| Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants | Ratified 12 Mar 2002 | Department of Environment |
| Treaty on Fisheries Between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the USA, 1987, Port Moresby | Ratified 28 Mar 2003 (10 year extension) | Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries |
| UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992 | Ratified 27 Feb 1996 Ratified 3 Jul 2002 | Department of Environment |
| Biosafety Protocol | | |
| UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1992 | Ratified 27 Feb 1996 Ratified 6 May 1999 | Meteorological Services |
| Kyoto Protocol | | |
| United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 | Signed 1984 Acceded Sept 2003 | Attorney General's Office |
| Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer 1985 | New Zealand signed on Niue's behalf. | Department of Environment |
| Waigani Convention | Ratified 2003 | Department of Environment |
| World Heritage Convention, 1972 | Ratified 21 Dec 2000 | Department of Community Affairs |

(Source: Nemaia, F. 2005., Niue's National Action Plan Addressing Land Degradation and Drought., a report prepared for the UNCCD)

As a member of the Pacific Forum, Niue also recognize the Pacific Plan and efforts are already in place to ensure that the national objectives are in line with the regional objectives and vice versa (pers comm. G. Talagi-Lines). A Pacific Plan Officer has also been employed with the sole purpose to coordinate events and to ensure consistency

between the national and regional level. From Niue's perspective the Pacific Plan is to enhance and:

- i. support the national development strategies as principal means for articulating and acting on national aspirations and fulfilling obligations internationally;
- ii. mobilize sources of funding and technical support where there are gaps in the national plans;
- iii. Support the convergence, complementary and coherence between different frameworks of poverty reduction, economic growth and investment, and environmental management in pursuit of sustainable development;
- iv. Mobilise bilateral networks
- v. Create a mechanism whereby trade and investment barriers and practices are removed under PICTA⁶ and PACER⁷. (pers comm. G.Talagi-Lines)

With respect to Millennium Development Goals, Niue is also an active support, and efforts are also in place to ensure consistency. However, in terms of implementation, national interests will always take precedence no matter what.

5. Public Participation

The NISP 2003 – 2008 was initially developed with the assistance of the public through a national summit organized specifically for the development of the plan. Government officials and departments contributed as well as key civil societies such as the Village Councils, National Women's Council, National Youth Council, Sports Association and the Chamber of Commerce. The national summit identified the priority areas for Niue given its resources, capacity and financial capability as well as their potentials to largely contribute towards Niue's economic development (pers comm. C.Tatui).

However, although there was national/public involvement in the development of the NISP, participation or consultation with respect to the actual development projects or investments tends to be lacking or at the desired level of the major groups. Basically, this is a weakness across the country and the outcry tended to come after certain projects have been approved or implemented.

Attempts have been made to improve the current level of participation for the private sector through the proposal to establish a single body representing all the participants in the sector irrespective of whether one is a grower or a high flying entrepreneur, but this has been met with some resistance by the existing Chamber of Commerce (pers comm. L. Rex and G. Talagi-Lines). Basically, the Chamber of Commerce emphatically argued that it represents all private sector and hence establishing another body would only dissipate the limited resources available (pers comm. L. Rex). Other than the continue financial support by government towards private sector infrastructure such as the development of the post cyclone Heta industrial park, there is very little progress made towards improving the channels of communication between the parties concern. Known common in small island states, financial affiliations verses benefits of being "member of the club" mentality continues to be the core problem. Hence, Government

⁶ Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement.

⁷ Pacific Agreement for Closer Economic Relations with Australia and New Zealand.

and the private sector and the current practices continue where various sub-groups continue to exist and participate outside the Chamber. Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce continues to assert itself as the main body for the private sector although understandably its effectiveness is still being questioned. Given this, it is generally difficult for Government or Cabinet to respond to the viewpoints of the Chamber of Commerce independently other than to consult sub-groups separately should it so wishes.

A central body for NGOs, Niue National Alliance of NGOs (NIUANGO), was recently established with the primary purpose of bringing together all the various NGOs under one umbrella. Given its infancy status, its presence is not yet eminent and naturally 'teething problems' of being the 'new boy in the block' are yet to be accomplished. Moreover, as the existence of a number of small NGO groups at the national level and the small population, there is a strong presence of the same people wearing various hats and this leads to potential conflict of interests, which also play a part in delaying progress or development of the body.

Whilst Niue may boast that "small is beautiful", speaking out or speaking against another person or even against the government's decision could easily be detrimental as one would be end up with new 'enemies' at the wrong place and at the wrong time. Hence, the reasons why radio talkback shows and several local website forums and bulletin boards provide interesting views. (pers comm. H. Pihigia and L. Rex). Thus, it is certainly difficult to draw in various groups as seen from the attempts being made.

As NIUANGO is a recently established body, it is perceived that it will continue to struggle to get full recognition as there a number of groups that has long traditions and history such as the National Women's Council that have been in place for many decades with well established ties to the community and the Government level. In essence, not having a consolidate voice in place much earlier coupled with the popular view of too many groups and sub-groups as well as having the 'enemies' syndrome contribute to the existing vacuum of having an effective watch-dog for Government, its policy and various developmental projects.

The lack of a consolidated voice or Group body as a watchdog for Government's drive for economic development and prosperity may be regarded as one of the weakness for Niue. Although there may be avenues for public voices and complaints to be made, the lack of a recognized and overall national body strained the efforts of the civil society and consequently failed to make an impact with respect to the developmental activities and projects implemented by Government.

From the consultations with representatives of the civil society groups, there is an apparent desire to participate in the decision making process with respect to key developments in the country however, there appears to be a lack of opportunity to do this effectively. Although there have been some involvement or opportunity to participate in the decision making process from time to time, it appears that this was dictated by the strict requirements of the donors to consult or include the key civil society groups in the process. Otherwise, the general practice is one out of reaction after an investment or project has been approved, and not beforehand when viewpoints

of the civil society would be crucial for the effectiveness and success of the project(s) (pers comm. H. Pihigia).

Essentially, although the public participated in the development of the NISP, the involvement in the decision making process is still lacking and therefore needs to be improved to ensure sustainability and/or continuity of projects.

6. Enabling Environment

The Economic, Planning, Development and Statistics Unit (EPDSU) of the Premier's Department has overall responsibility for the development of the Niue Strategic Plans and overseeing all developmental and investments projects on Niue. This Unit is also responsible for preparing project documents and coordinating efforts from various bodies and departments in terms of economic analysis and planning.

Until recently, the Department of Environment is responsible for promoting sustainable development issues and the focal point for the NSDS. The new focal point is the EPDSU. The change is necessary to ensure that all the three pillars of sustainable development are addressed at/by the institution that is largely responsible for the overall national development and drive for economic prosperity. According to the Director of Environment Department, ideally his department should be at the forefront during the formulation of new development however this is not the case as the department is often consulted after the project(s) has been approved (pers comm. S. Tongatule). The Department blamed the lack of capacity – skilled human resource – as a key constraint with respect to the continuity of various international projects such as the Biodiversity project and International Waters project which are due to be concluded in the near future. Basically, while funding is available for the projects, implementations have been lacking or slow due to the lack of capacity.

Given the smallness of Niue, bringing together key institutions and agencies is not seen as a problem. At the Government level, a regular weekly meeting of the heads of departments provides a good avenue for updates on projects, activities and emphasizing Government's priorities. Where problems are identified, this forum assists in resolving them and resources are moved accordingly. Where problems and issues are more complicated, special working groups have been established to address these. However, while these special working groups have worked to a certain extent, the major challenge is continuity as key people in the working groups tended to be on frequent duty travel or recalled to address other issues in other areas. Again, the lack of capacity due to the small pool of human resources to draw from, is a major contributor to this.

As mentioned earlier, majority of the projects are implemented under the direction or guidance of a steering committee or working group. This group is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the project is implemented within the specified time frame and allocated budget. Thus, with the incorporation of sustainable development into the mainstream planning and development it is envisaged that current frameworks and systems will be adopted without major changes. If there is going to be any changes,

they should be in terms of strengthening the involvement, consultation and decision making process for/with the civil society and private sector groups.

Currently, the Government spearheads all the major development on the island with some participation from the civil society or private sector. Thus, the chair of the working groups is appointed by Cabinet. If the Cabinet Minister is in the working group, the Chair position is assumed by him/her unless otherwise stated.

Niue has yet to embrace the many layers of councils, commissions and ad hoc expert groups such as those practiced in other countries in promoting/progressing sustainable development. Its small population and lack of capacity would make this requirement difficult to achieve and thus, it is pointless to expect this type of framework/practice for Niue.

7. Outcomes and Means of Implementation

7.1 *Indicators and Monitoring*

Niue is very much in a development phase in every aspect and thus specific indicators for decision making that are linked directly to the NISP are yet to be developed fully and implemented, particularly the sustainable development indicators (pers comm. G.Talagi-Lines). The set of indicator currently in use is the Human Resource Index which was developed with the assistance of the UNDP. This indicator has been widely used to demonstrate Niue's level and quality of its education and health systems, and indirectly poverty. Basically, this indicator has been used for reporting purposes only, rather than for tracking implementation or decision making process.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is also another indicator that has been widely used to track the spending or the concentration of Government's spending and revenue stream. This indicator tends to be lagging due to lack of resources and capacity. Often the most current GDP figure is two to three years behind. For example, the current GDP figures are for 2003 at approximately \$17million (www.niuestats.com). The Government is the major contributor to GDP accounting for approximately 52 – 55% with the agriculture and fishing sectors contributing approximately 24% (www.niuestats.com). The bulk of the Government's revenue is made up of foreign aid and this is mainly from New Zealand.

The national Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators are currently being developed by the national MDG taskforce. These indicators will be used for reporting purposes as well as tracking the progress of development. It is anticipated that the National MDG report for Niue will be launched in October 2006. The capacity of the Statistics Unit to collect and monitor data will need to be addressed in order for the developments under each MDG to be tracked. Currently, the Statistics Unit is charged with the responsibility to collect data from all Government departments however the downfall has been at the departmental level where data were not kept in a database where it is easy to download.

The lack of capacity and resources currently hinders the effective collections of data to track or monitor the progress on development. To date, data collection has not been a strong point with departments as this is not a priority area in terms of available financial resources (pers comm. G Talagi-Lines). In addition, there is an assumption that the Statistics Unit is responsible for collecting the data and therefore should be responsible for ensuring that certain databases or forms are available to assist the departments in providing data (pers comm. G. Talagi-Lines). This attitude needs to be addressed if Niue is to have effective monitoring of the progress and effectiveness of projects as well as meeting its international obligations as stipulated under various conventions and arrangements.

7.2 Budgeting and Aid Effectiveness

Niue's financial year runs from July 1 to June 30. The budget process is focused mainly on government departments and their target work programs for the year. These work programs, outputs and projected budget are presented to the budget committee that is responsible for the initial approval of the departments' projections. The budget committee has the initial discretion to downsize a department's budget based on agreed priority areas. Final approval is granted by the Assembly⁸ after going through the Public Expenditure Committee.

The budget tended to be dominated by personnel costs and very little on actual projects and grants for various groups. Project funds are available on ad hoc basis and are not included in the budgeting process, with the exception of the projects/program under the New Zealand Bilateral Program. Projects under the New Zealand Bilateral program require Cabinet's endorsement and then approval by the New Zealand government before they are included in the Budget (pers comm. C. Tatui and G. Talagi-Lines). This approval is normally provided during the JCG meeting immediately before the Budget is presented to the Assembly for approval.

The Treasury Department is responsible for monitoring the overall budget implementation. At departmental level, the Head is responsible for the monitoring of his/her department's budget.

With respect to New Zealand funded projects, the NZAid⁹ Coordinator through the JCG is responsible for the monitoring of progress and implementation of the projects. The coordinator works closely with the New Zealand government on a daily basis as well as the various project managers. Basically, the NZAid projects are geared towards economic development while emphasizing sustainability. Projects funded under NZAid are developed by the Government of Niue and submitted for approval. To date, only one project proposal have failed to meet the criteria of the NZAid and the issue of sustainability is suspected to be the main concern for this (pers comm. J. Tamate). The project proposal is currently under review and will be re-submitted for approval.

⁸ Fono Ekepule Niue (Niue parliament).

⁹ New Zealand Aid. The Coordinator is attached to the Government of Niue and is member of the Niue JCG team.

8. Concluding Remarks

Effectively, the NISP 2003 – 2008 provides an overall guidance for Niue's development and priority areas. It helps give direction and sets the destination of where Niue would like to be and what is required to get there. To some extent, the NISP also provides an over arching framework to facilitate activities in all areas in the economy through the five key strategic objectives that have been highlighted. Although no priority or ranking is provided, the objectives are all crucial as Niue journey towards prosperity.

Sustainability or sustainable development is implied throughout NISP. Given its level of development and smallness, it is not surprising that Niue's focus is on economic development. While this implies non-sustainable practices, the civil societies and the various conventions that Niue is a party to, should be sufficient "check and balance" mechanism for its development aspirations.

Changes particularly with respect to infrastructures such as a proper waste and sewage disposal system, the use of alternative/renewable energy instead of diesel-powered energy, and water systems, will involve large financial input and this is something that Niue lack of. Thus, international assistance will be necessary to help the island with its efforts towards development. Various technical assistances have been made available by a number of regional and international organizations but transfer of knowledge has not been effective as those who are trained tend to migrate for greener pastures.

Essentially, with limited funding and capacity, it appears that Niue has no option but to focus on economic development aspects and deal with the consequences as they emerge. If the cautious approach is to be adopted, the level of economic development and progress would be very little and thus Niue will continue to rely on foreign assistance. Effectively, this is the forever "catch-22" situation for Niue that must be addressed one way or another, and sooner if not later.

The irony of the matter is that although there is a growing concern over the continuing decline population, the small population may be Niue's saving grace in terms of slowing the level of development to the pace that is suitable for Niue's environment and precious resources and limited services. For example, the recent problems that the island have encountered such as the power black-out for nearly 5 days due to the burning of the only power station on the island would have resulted in far worse circumstances however this was not the case. Rather, people turned back to traditional cooking and coping methods and survived the ordeal. Furthermore, with the small population, there is less pressure on the existing infrastructure and to a certain extent, the environmental degradation and social problems associated with high population.

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ATTACHMENT: Meetings and Interview Report

MEETINGS WITH CROSS-SECTION OF SOME COMMUNITY LEADERS AND SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

The following people were met and discussed keys issues concerning this assignment. The type of issues discussed evolved around the set of questions which could be seen at the end of this attachment.

Government Officials

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Mr Crosley Tatui | - | Secretary to the Government |
| Mr Sauni Tongatule | - | Director – Department of Environment |
| Ms Tagaloa Cooper | - | Senior Staff – Department of Environment |
| Mr Brendon Pasisi | - | Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry |
| Mrs Gaylene Tasmania | - | Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry |
| Mr Fapoi Akesi | - | Director – Department of Community Affairs |
| Mr Andre Siohane | - | Manager – Water Division |
| Mr Sione Hetutu | - | Manager – Public Health/Waste Management |
| Ms Gloria Talagi-Lines | - | Acting Director of EPDS |
| Mr Speedo Hetutu | - | Manager – Niue Power Corporation |
| Mr Sionetasi Pulehetōa | - | Manager – MET Office |

Civil Society

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Mrs Lofa Rex | - | Chairperson – Chamber of Commerce |
| Mr Aokuso Pavihi | - | Coordinator – NIOFA |
| Mr Billy Talagi | - | Vice President - Fisherman's Association. |
| Mr Robin Hekau | - | President – Niue National Youth Council |
| Mrs Lapasi Paka | - | President – Women's Club Association |
| Mr Harkai Pihigia | - | Businessman/SportsAdministrator/Tuapa Village Council |

Methodology is by way of having these informal meetings as fact finding, then assess for a rough impression of what knowledge or understanding across all sectors of the community of key issues concerning sustainable development verses Niue and its commitment to international obligations concerning the environment.

A. Meeting Notes.

Mr Crosley Tatui – Secretary to the Government

The Office of the Secretary to the Government plays a critical role in the whole operations of government. Being Head of the public service, he is responsible for ensuring that policies of government is understood by departmental heads and implemented forthwith. The overall coordination of all major work and related developments are understood both ways from departments to Cabinet and vice versa. Accordingly the office has been identified as the focal point for all matters of importance to government whether they are just internal issues or matters of international interest. This is the focal point for Niue's involvement with international Treaties Conventions and the like. Similarly, the office should be in the forefront when dealing with the NISP and related matters.

However these important links are being criticized from senior personnel with concern for the lack of consultations on key development matters. With the recent Fisheries agreement on a joint business venture with the Reef Group plus the propose logging venture with another overseas company have brought these concerns to the fore. The question of government's decisions on key major developments like in fisheries seems to tip more towards economic development whilst seems to be less towards sustainability and concern for the environment put Niue in a very awkward dilemma. The demand from its public spending does not match its revenue sources;

hence it is not unusual for any government if confronted with similar situations to gamble on a decision; however it does not mean that we are ignoring our responsibilities to conservation. On the question of key areas of focus by government specifically population development, fisheries, tourism and vanilla and nonu farming; the farming sector focus bears no problem as the emphasis on organic farming covers the concern for sustainability. Tourism although the current emphasis is on infra structure on increase accommodation facilities, the industry still promotes eco-tourism the main focus. Population development is the over arching factor to assist all the key areas. We need manpower resources in the farming sector for the nonu picking and vanilla growing and similarly in the fisheries processing plant and in the tourism industry. Interestingly, the hidden factor that seems to be ignored at this point is the pressure that these changes will bring about towards other sectors. The increased population will have a relative impact in the energy, water, waste management/disposal and not forgetting our mainstay staple food crop taro and taro farming.

Department of Environment: Mr S Tongatule (Director) and Miss T Cooper (Senior Staff)

This is the key department that has been the focal point in government which deals with all environmental issues including sustainable development matters. Recently, the function was transferred to the Economic, Planning, Development and Statistics Unit under the Premier's Department.

Although having a good knowledge of the National Integrated Strategic Plan (NISP) and had been involved during its preparation, the apparent lack of consultation from government central agency is notable in its monitoring, updates and new developments. The department strongly believed that it should be in the forefront being involved during the formulation and developing of any new development, rather than the current practice of being consulted afterwards. Concerns of the department are with the lack of available skill human resources, sustainability of some of the good work done under projects like Biodiversity and International Waters Program which are now ending. Specific areas in the department needs to be addressed are – much more effort to be done on the stocktaking of our underground water reserves including quality control and similarly more effort towards a Waste Management system covering all the different wastes on the island. Other concerns relates to a more concerted effort by government agencies and decision makers to be more consultative and to foster a togetherness approach.

In quoting an observation quipped by one them -

“ in a lot of ways we are very fortunate that a lot developments we currently do here in Niue are sustainable, only because of the current size of our population ...”

Being the focal point for all current GEF projects for Niue's signatory to Treaties and Conventions concerning the environment, they believed that Niue has done the best it could ensuring the principles and purposes of these commitments were followed and observed. We could have done more or better although we were only benefiting from regional programs. Obviously, some concerns were noted as very little visible benefits were seen of these programs being filtered down to the community level.

Mr B Pasisi and Mrs G Tasmania - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

The department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is responsible to the 3 main headings as the department is called plus a number of regional projects that namely the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP's), Biosafety, Biosecurity and the International Waters Program and soil degradation to name a few. Being regional projects, the emphasis seems more on awareness and educational aspect. The department is happy with the way things are with these projects and is satisfied with accessibility and availability to resources being party to international efforts towards cleaner and safer world.

Of national concern the department also plays a key role with its focal areas of developments under the NISP. Fisheries development, which currently underway through government's joint venture with the Reef Group have experience a good start so far. However concern has been expressed on the unknown quantity of our fish stock of the species targeted which the department is addressing with the help of regional institutions. Vanilla and nonu farming are both promoted through organic farming practice with the view to capitalize on high quality product

targeting niche markets abroad. The department is working very closely with the nonu and vanilla farmers with having a NIOFA coordinator being office and working together with the technical staff of the department ensuring NISP goals are met. It is still early days yet to see what kind of harvest we have with vanilla farming as await the first crop out next year since the recovery after cyclone Heta.

Concerns also has been raised over the years relating to the substantial amount of herbicides and artificial fertilizers being imported for farmers use; specifically concerning the destruction to biodiversity and potential contamination to the water lenses. The argument on this assertion is still not convincing hence the department is working together with the interested parties.

The department is satisfied with the legal framework that it is working under, although there is a need to review the legislations concerning quarantine matters. It is noted that work is moving slowly in this direction because of our lack of capacity to administer and police these legislations.

Department of Community Affairs and National Youth Council: Mr F Akesi and Mr R Hekau

The meeting was held together with both the President of the National Youth Council and the Director of Community Affairs. The Director is the point of contact between the Youth Council and all other NGO's with the Niue Government..

At the outset, it is noted that whilst the Council is very active and vigorous in its effort to formulate a Policy Paper for its existence, much of which are geared towards building the capacity within the institution as good young citizens to be leaders of tomorrow. Very little in the Policy Paper is targeted towards nation building; however it would be amiss to ignore them completely as most of the members are public servants where some have direct involvement with policy formulation for government and some participate in the implementation phase of some of government programs and projects. For instance, the government runs a Young Farmers Project targeting unemployed school leavers, assisting them into establishing a manageable Vanilla Plantation, Vegetable Growing and recently, small scale piggery and poultry farming. The aim is to train and provide the young recruit the necessary skills through actually working and hands-on experience. At the end of the program these little ventures becoming sustainable and eventually operate commercially by the young recruit. However this program is being jointly administered and coordinated by the Department of Agriculture and the Economic Planning, Development and Statistics Unit of the Premier's Department.

As a group, the NYC does not have any direct impact on the NISP or any major developments. They are not usually consulted nor invited to participate in any developments of government. This is their major concern, in that decision makers are aware that they will inherit most if not some of these major developments as time goes on and yet they are being left out when some of these big decisions were made. The group maintains that they see themselves as a partner to government and certainly not a pressure/lobby group. "LEADERS OF TOMORROW."

MR ANDRE SIOHANE - Water Division, Public Works Department

Water is one of the most necessary resource for every household, whether it is a business, a school, a hospital or an ordinary family household. Niue has plenty of this; it came down from the heavens by rain and through the soil and porous rocks and stored under ground in what we called our water lenses. Currently, the water lenses are what we are dependent upon for practically all of the nation's water needs - drawing water from underground.

Accordingly, this is where the Water Division is responsible for – the infrastructure to get the water from underground and distribute it to every dwelling household or wherever necessary nationwide. Most if not all of this infrastructure is in place. However, the process of pumping water up from underground to reservoirs is dependent on another necessary item – electricity. That is, electricity from the central electrical power generating plant that services the whole island.

The Division's concern includes the quantity and quality control of the water lenses and is working very closely with the Public Health Division of the Health Department towards addressing some of these concerns. The two agencies have just completed compiling an update report on this matter of which a report is in the process of being released.

The other major concern is being primarily dependent on the costly government's electrical power service to pump the water up from underground inevitably must look towards a cheaper and less cumbersome alternative. This issue must be address urgently.

Niue is also blessed with an abundance of rain water throughout the year. Since the devastation of Cyclone Heta in 2004, just about all of the dwelling households on the island had been re-roofed. That is the old asbestos roof taken off replaced by the new roofing iron. Hence the new roof is ideal as water catchments. The only extra work needed is new spouting and a water tank. This was the original practice until it was found that the water from the old asbestos roof were dirty and unacceptable due to the mould growing on it. The convenience of tapping to the main water system and subsequently save costs of purchasing new water catchments also featured heavily in the change of things.

This would be an ideal time to promote this back-up, rainwater tank system for each household with perhaps some incentive to assist home owners towards helping themselves.

In terms of wider policy issues, the Division does not have any direct involvement with any matters concerning water. Its existence is basically operational and implementation; therefore the NISP or related matters are hardly a document that they work closely insofar as they are concern. The Division however was involved with the International Waters Program on the aspect of water; unfortunately this program is at its finishing stage.

The other major concern for the Division, which perhaps be addressed at national level, is the dependent on Central Power plant to pump water up from underground. Obviously we must look at the possibility of tapping into renewable energy technology.

WHERE THERE IS WATER, THERE IS LIFE!

MR SIONETASI PULEHETOA – MANAGER, Niue Meteorological Office

The Office is in charge of all Meteorological matters for Niue which encompasses the GEF Climate Change Project. With Niue being prone to natural disasters like cyclones, and especially with recent experiences of these cyclones intensifying, it highlights the urgency and importance of this global phenomenon.

However the role of the Division is basically of data collection and dissemination; more particularly it is responsible for disseminating accurate and timely information in the event of hurricanes and cyclones. Whilst the Climate Change Project deals primarily with weather patterns and climatic issues, the project also includes Renewable Energy, Greenhouse Gases and Sustainable Development, which in Niue's case are being looked after by other government agencies namely Niue Power Corporation, Environment department and Planning, Economic Development Division respectively.

The Manager is happy with the way things are going on at the present time and does not see any particular area that needs addressing.

MR SIONE HETUTU – ENVIRONMENT/PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER, Department of Health

Mr S Hetutu is in charge of the Division in the Health Department that deals with preventative public health care matters which among other things includes quality control of the drinking water and Waste Management/Disposal. The Division has to work very closely with other government agencies like the Water Division from the Public Works Department on the aspect of water quality control and with the Environment department relating to environmental standards compliance concerning Waste Disposal and Management. Whilst both these functions are manageable at the present time, there is indeed still room for improvement. For water, they are currently doing quality control following WHO standards and the Water Division is responsible for the quantity control.

Waste Management/Disposal is working adequately with the rubbish collection program that runs weekly around the island being financed by government. Similarly a rubbish tip control by government where all the rubbish collected are being disposed and later bulldozed as landfill. Metal scraps and disused vehicles are stored separately, similarly with car batteries and asbestos roofing still uncertain what to do with them. Empty aluminum cans are being recycled as being purchased by an NGO group and send back to New Zealand. Sewage disposal is the responsibility of the division where raw sewage is being pumped into quarry pits around the island. Some concern has been expressed with the increased electronic equipment being imported with a good number being damage and have found their way to the rubbish dump. They

should be stored separately. Other more dangerous chemical wastes has been identified and disposed of whilst working closely with the department of Agriculture and Public Works. With the push by the government to find ways of increasing the population; waste management and waste disposal must become an integral of this process.

Mr Speedo Hetutu – Manager Niue Power Corporation

Niue Power is the agency of the Niue Government responsible for the production and generation of electric power including its distribution to every household on the island. With the exception of the Niue Fisheries Processing Plant, Niue Power is the only supplier to the power grid around the island. A system that has been inherited through the years, primarily due to its convenience and capacity to handle problems as encountered since the system was in place in the late sixties. Although plagued with the increasing fuel costs during the last 30 years, the government plods on with the same, avoiding disruptions whilst paying hefty costs to generate power. And because Niue does not have the population base, this would mean two things either the consumers pay in exorbitant costs or the producer to subsidize. In Niue's case we took the latter.

Mr S Hetutu welcomes the opportunity to have an input to this report, particularly as the Corporation has just come out of a major national crisis. The Power Station that generates power to the whole nation was destroyed in a fire resulting in a total blackout of the country for a period of 5 days. A new generator was purchased and installed, then repair one other partially damaged one to compliment the new one during peak times.

Things are just starting to be normal again as the corporation awaits the commencement of the move towards renewable energy, where the introduction of wind turbines to generate power complimenting the existing system of diesel generators. This is a major project funded by the European Union which due to start next month. The Manager is very concern that here they moving towards renewable energy and his existing manpower resources do not have the capacity to cope with the change. However he is optimistic that these changes are for the better and must be introduce as soon as possible. With this project he hopes to push the inclusion of solar water heating and even to include a backup power system of a small unit of wind turbine generator perhaps just one light and one power point in a situation of power blackout.

Mr Harkai Pihigia – Businessman, Deputy President Niue Rugby Union, Member of the Tuapa Village Council, Church Deacon...

Apart from all outlined above, he also a typical Niuean subsistence farmer expected to be part and contribute to his community involvements. Community participation plays a big part of Niuean life which has been noted to have a big expectation of ones commitment. As a subsistence farmer finding a easier way to do things is the only way juggling his spare time.

He raised a very interesting point worth noting. Niue is a small island nation in the world scene with very scarce resources. Committing to these international conventions, protocols and what have there, shows our commitment and our concern for the environment that we share. However the 'big boys' in the global community has not really shown any commitment or any leadership, and yet we little 'boys' are expected to tow the line. When Cyclone Katrina hits United States, it bears the same intensity, strength and destruction as Cyclone Heta that devastated Niue the same year.

He continues to be push the voice of the NGO's and plod on doing his thing. He said he could easily have taken the easier road of taking his family overseas but believes that Niue is the place for him. One of the few hard core Niueans who believes that government should regularly take time out and listen more to what the people are saying. We are very lucky being one big family scattered around the one island where everyone knows everyone. With that it should be no trouble developing things like national plans and mobilizing developments and projects that are sustainable to our wellbeing and the environment.

Mr Aokuso Pavihi – Coordinator Niue Island Organic Farmers Association (NIOFA)

NIOFA is a NGO whom have been established to promote organic farming practices following established standards observed overseas. The group advocates strongly against the use of synthetic fertilizers and strong herbicides but only herbicides that complies with international standards. Primarily the main herbicide used in Niue now is the weed killer – paraquat which was believed to be very strong and may have an effect on Niue's water lenses underground.

The group has establish a very good link with government particularly with the promotion of the two crops that has been chosen to concentrate as cash crops, namely vanilla and nonu. The rational behind this move is to target high value niche markets abroad as Niue cannot meet the huge quantities required by overseas markets. The group now has forged a very close partnership with government with specific funds allocated for the farming of these crops with a coordinator from the group being office and working together with officers of the agriculture department. Members joining the group is on the increase, but may they may encounter problems when the crop starts flowering which will require special skills for the labour intensive manual pollination of flowers. According to the Coordinator it has been raised with government in trying to find a solution; otherwise everything else is working to plan.

Mrs Lofa Rex – Chairperson, Chamber of Commerce

Although long established, the organization is relatively small. It supports every effort towards sustainable development. That is, any development that does not harm the environment that can be continue for a long time. However, in looking at the types of businesses currently on the island, the majority of which are service providers. i.e. owners of shops, cafés and bars, trades people, travel agencies and tourism accommodation e.g. motels etc.

Consultation with the government is very rare. Occurrences of such could only be cited as being a result from a reaction and not because of an obligation in their (Government's) process of decision making. It does not help where there has been a long poor relationship between some sectors of the public sector and some members of the private sector. The Chambers wishes for a partnership relationship with government and the parties are getting closer towards achieving this.

Although with good intention by those involved, unfortunately there has been a communication gap for some time now from small business owners especially those from the primary industry namely farming and fisheries that their "little voice is not heard" and the Chamber is only there for the elite, well established businesses. There are talks of forming a new body to look after everyone including the small businesses interest and other non government organizations which are the non business organizations. PRIVATE SECTOR – ENGINE FOR GROWTH

Mrs Lapasi Paka – Niue National Women's Club.

The Women's Club, a vibrant, long established organization is a national group with combining all the various individual village Women's Clubs together. Similar to the Youth Council, its role is strengthening the capacity of the group and its members; primarily in creativity and passing on the knowledge of handcraft making, including traditional woven wares/weaving, homemaking techniques and cooking. They did not have any involvement with the preparation of NISP and have no knowledge of what is in it.

They do not really see its role to change from what has been there ever since. That is to support and implement government's decisions but, does not see it appropriate to participate or try to influence government's decision. They are happy with what they are doing and likewise with what is happening in government. They are very happy with their contact with the government at both departmental and ministerial level and just wish to maintain a status quo.

This would indicate a typical role of women in our society, playing the supportive role whether it's the family, community and at national level. GOOD WOMAN SUPPORT GOOD MAN.

Mr Billy Talagi – Vice President - Fisherman's Association

A relatively new organization that has done well to establish good links with the machinery of government. However, in common with all NGO's it still struggles to be involved with policy decisions and major government developments relating to fisheries and marine developments.

The group has very little knowledge or any direct involvement with the NISP. The group maintains that a good lesson could be seen from neighboring island states with big fisheries development where their fishing fleets catch had gradually reduced through the years. This would indicate that the fish stock is getting less. This is the main concern of the organization to ensure that fishing or fisheries within our waters continue to thrive for generations to come.

They are satisfied with the current avenue of contact with government but wish to be consulted when formulating any development relating to fisheries. Outside donors do involve them in their consultations but it seems that they tend to listen more to government officials.

GIVE A FISH – EAT ONE DAY

TEACH TO FISH – EAT MANY FISH

FISH WISELY – EAT MANY FISH TOMORROW.

Mrs Gloria Talagi –Lines : Acting Director of Economic, Planning, Development and Statistics Unit (EPDSU)

This Unit is the focal for this assignment. Hence, at the outset before commencing, I provided the questions in advance before meeting her. It is the belief that the Unit must champion by way of developing, formulating, advisory plus monitoring all matters of government concerning economic development. The question is, whether current practices, procedures and strategies do actually follow Niue's international obligations with sustainable development.

It is with gratitude that Mrs G Talagi-Lines took the extra step to provide written answers before our meeting. I have decided to record what she presented to avoid repetition as some of these were covered in the main report itself

What are your views regarding sustainable development and does Niue support sustainable development?

The definition of sustainable development demands long term perspective about the consequences of today's activities. It goes beyond economic aspects to include environmental and social concerns in formulating all types of policies. It also recognizes that local and global co-operation in terms of mobilizing resources is critical to achieving sustainable economic, environmental and social conditions in Niue.

But putting this concept into practice is not a simple affair. The government needs analytical and methodological approaches in order for it to align the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainable development in decision-making. And there is also a challenge of forecasting the costs and benefits of actions taken today. All this is difficult enough, but the question of how the actions of the government affect its citizens is to be addressed as well. Guidance is still lacking on how it can develop coherent sustainable development policies which take into account their likely impact on its citizens.

Successful practices in the national sustainable strategies adopted in most developing small nations should be molded into Niue's situation should include:

Policy integration – where national strategies should give consideration to environmental, economic, and social concerns in integrated approaches contained in national plans and assessments.

Intergeneration timeframe – national strategies should adopt long term timeframes which enable inclusion of intergenerational principles and indicators

Analysis and assessments – integrated assessment tools should be used in national reports to identify the environmental and social costs and benefits of policy and strategy options.

Co-ordination and institutions – a wide range of government departments and agencies should be involved in the formulation and implementation of national strategies with the overall responsibility of the Economic Planning Unit.

Local and regional governance – local and regional authorities should be fully involved in the development of national strategies, with certain delivery aspects devolved to sub-national levels.

Stakeholder participation – stakeholders should participate with government in committees responsible for developing and implementing national strategies.

Indicators and targets- strategies should be based on structured indicator systems (enumerated in national plans) to assist monitoring progress and to serve as quantitative targets.

Monitoring and evaluation – independence bodies or processes should be established to act as watchdogs monitoring implementation of national strategies and providing recommendations for improvement.

The role of the government in all this is to create an enabling environment for participation, provide leadership, and develop legal and policy frameworks that promote development in a sustainable manner.

What are the development priorities of Niue and do you think these support sustainable development?

The NISP is the Government's key planning document, which outlines the guiding principles, and the national strategic development objectives and strategies to achieve the National Vision.

The priorities does enshrine sustainable development, yet monitoring, control, and enforcement that of those guiding principles is currently lacking. Furthermore, it's the overall lack of compliance with the Niue Integrated Strategic Plan.

A lot of policies, strategies and assessments were done in the past years seems to be collecting dust on the shelves as there is either a lack of enforcement or lack of skilled manpower to undertake those monitoring or lack of will from the bureaucracy to enforce or to ensure that public servants are doing their duties.

What role does your office play in respect to sustainable development?

The role of the Economic Planning and Development is to monitor development initiatives of the Niue Government to ensure that they are aligned with the Niue Integrated Strategic Plan in a sustainable manner.

What are the limitations of the NISP with respect to sustainable development?

The limitations at the moment are that there is no on-going monitoring or enforcement of the plan against development and legislations that guides those developments. There is also no coherence between the budget and strategy priorities, most sectors are working in isolation of the budget and the NISP.

Does it adequately support sustainable development and is there a need for more?

The Plan does support sustainable development, but there are no indicators to measure success or failures of development against the Plan's strategic objectives because of the almost total lack of monitoring.

What are government's plans with respect to sustainable development?

The Government's plan is to review the Niue Integrated Strategic Plan (2003-2008) to integrate all sustainable strategies that are currently in place or those which Niue agreed with other donor agencies, also to ensure that enforcement, compliance and monitoring mechanisms are in place.

Are there key areas that need to be addressed?

I think the key areas stated in the Niue Integrated Strategic Plan of 2003 to 2008 needs to be addressed closely so that it incorporates international obligations from various conventions which Niue is a party to. Monitoring needs to be established to ensure compliance and enforcement needs to be instigated. Capacities at the local or national level have to be strengthened as effective sustainable development governance at all levels is a key to the realization of the goals of development. In this context, the promotion of the concept of sustainable development is key.

Is there any preference?

Preference should be given to the importance of coherent decision making. Here in Niue the government need ways to measure whether they are progressing toward sustainable development, and how their progress compares with that of days gone by. There is a need to measure the synergies and trade-offs between economic, environmental and social values. But since the concept of sustainable development includes a time element, any measure of progress towards it must also include evaluating the longer-term implications of current decisions and behaviors. And before we can measure progress, we first need to establish the current state of play as regards to sustainable development.

Currently there is no monitoring and an overall lack of control.

Where does the Pacific Plan fit in?

The role of the Pacific Plan is to enhance and :

- vi. support the national development strategies as principal means for articulating and acting on national aspirations and fulfilling obligations internationally;
- vii. mobilize sources of funding and technical support where there are gaps in the national plans;
- viii. Support the convergence, complementary and coherence between different frameworks of poverty reduction, economic growth and investment, and environmental management in pursuit of sustainable development;
- ix. Mobilise bilateral networks
- x. Create a mechanism whereby trade and investment barriers and practices are removed under PICTA and PACER. .

What needs to be in place to make sure that there is vertical coherence in term of national, regional and international goals and priorities?

What need to be in place are sectoral policies or guidelines and a monitoring mechanism.

Vital to the successful implementation of any strategy is the need to ensure on going monitoring of programs and activities at all levels. Effective monitoring will ensure that linkages are clearly understood, responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined and necessary corrective actions are taken in a timely manner. Stringent review and reporting requirements has to be instituted to ensure effective communication at all levels.

The review process will culminate in the completion of formal written reports which highlights the achievements for the period reviewed, problems experienced and how these can be managed, summary of expenses including future activities of the organisation.

Where does EPDSU fit and what is its role with respect to development?

EPDSU, is primarily tasked with coordinating the implementation of Government Economic Policy, and will play a leading role in the planning, implementation, monitoring and review of the Niue Integrated Strategic Plan (NISP). In carrying out this task EPDSU will ensure that development is approached and pursued in an integrated manner hence the principle of sustainable development will remain at the fore in policy prescription.

EPDSU will provide advice during the annual budget exercise to ensure effective links between the NISP and budgetary allocations.

A series of capacity building and consultation sessions will be facilitated with key stakeholders on Corporate Planning to ensure that the priorities and actions in NISP and NISAP are translated into activities at sector level.

EPDSU also have a monitoring and review responsibility which involve conducting formal reviews on an annual basis, which will culminate in the completion of an **Annual Review and Development Strategy**, which will be used to guide Departmental/sector Planning processes for the ensuing year.

How does it link with other govt departments, regional organizations and international organizations with respect to development?

EPDSU's link with other departments, regional and international organization is :

- i. to ensure the effective integration of elements of the Plan with broader development policies and the existence of well-functioning institutions are vital aspects of implementation.
- ii. To prepare action plans, specifying time frames for implementation. These action plans should be viewed as self-disciplining process;
- iii. To engage implementing institutions to develop policies, legislation and regulatory framework;
- iv. To prepare projects and programmes and mobilizing resources for the implementation of actions or activities under the NISP.

What do you think needs to be done to address the weak points at the moment?

A co-ordination, monitoring and enforcement mechanism and a coherent decision-making process.

What role would you ideally would like to play with respect to sustainable development?

Ideally, EPDSU should work closely with other departments to strengthen the enforcement of all development strategies and to mobilise both information and resources at the national level.

What do you think about the role of civil society in sustainable development?

The civil society plays an important role in any development of the country; hence any development should undergo a participatory process. Indigenous wisdom and systems sometimes represent a vast pool of locally relevant experience and means for survival and adaptation can make substantive contributions to a national development strategy. Therefore, policy and institutional processes need to value and encourage their participation.

Do you think they should have an active role or would they be a hindrance instead to development?

The participation of all stakeholders including the civil society is one of the key components of implementing the concepts of development. It is strategic planning with the participation of all stakeholders that makes it possible to eliminate potential conflicts related to the implementation of the strategies. The objective of engaging the civil society is to reach a social consensus and wide participation in the process of practical implementation of sustainability.

The involvement of the civil society is a welcome sign, most often the civil society are seen to be hindrances to development (this will only happen if the information are not forthcoming from those planning the developments). The civil society's role is duly acknowledged as an important development partner and government will also make significant investment in these groups.

Innovative partnerships for their sustainable management have to be forged, above all calling upon the direct resource users who have a potential interest in the survival of a particular resource.

Niue may identify the most appropriate direction it would take, given its particular and unique circumstances to successfully implement its many strategies and policies by adopting mechanisms towards the protection of knowledge and access to resources to ensure harmonization across sectors of the present regime within government and extended to include non government stakeholders.

The civil society in collaboration with Government is expected to provide a significant and catalytic role in facilitating the process of implementing economic and social development. Government is committed to strengthening partnership with the civil society through the creation of an enabling environment and the on going provision of necessary support.

What are inter-agency mechanisms for sustainable development? Are there committees in place to oversee development? How effective are these groups? What needs to be in place to address the current weaknesses/challenges?

There are certain committees in place but these are inactive. What needs to be in place to address this challenge is a co-ordinating mechanism.

What are the current challenges?

The current challenges are: lack or no monitoring of enforcements, lack of monitoring of developments against objectives, lack of skilled manpower to undertake proper environmental assessments.

Based on a review carried out for the 1994-1998 and the 1999-2003 Strategic Plans, the following problems were identified as major constraints in achieving Niue's National development goals. These factors will continue to pose imminent threats to the successful implementation of the Niue Integrated Strategic Plan hence all stakeholders should take these into account in project planning and management both at organisational and individual level.

- *Lack of commitment by key stakeholders*
- *Limited capacity of departments to implement and monitor activities*
- *Lack of funding and resources to support program implementation*
- *Excessive burden on manpower due to commitment with other international obligations*
- *Lack of discipline and focus on the key projects*

- *Unfavourable Environmental factors*
- *Tendency to bypass formal channel of communication*
- *Key staff involvement with other core duties*
- *Lack of publicity and awareness of the Plan*
- *Lack of regular monitoring and reporting to stakeholders*
- *Inappropriate bureaucracy*

Further, there is:

- i. *Unwillingness to make the concept of sustainable development tangible and widely known as such,*
- ii. *Unwillingness of individuals and organizations to change one's behaviour (attitudes)*
- iii. *Unwillingness of all levels of decision-makers to make alternative, temporarily unpopular decisions;*
- iv. *A total lack of experience with the application of sustainable development instruments which have the potential to bring the sustainable development concept in its full context of actualization.*

What are the purposes of these indicators at the moment? Are they for gathering information for decision making, monitoring implementation of strategies or plans?

Development targets are often broad and very difficult to quantify, that's why specific measures must be developed for their implementation and monitoring the means of indicators. Indicators make it possible to monitor whether the proposed measures actually lead to achieving the strategic targets, and thus to a change in a given aspect of reality. The indicators themselves are not capable of attaining or even supporting sustainability, but they can be useful information for the decision making of various officials, and may help achieve better public knowledge of sustainable development. The use of transparent and measurable indicators is essential for good governance.

Indicators are meant to monitor the performance of any plan, strategy and its implementation. It is a measurable and aggregated portion of information related to an aspect of development. It simplifies information about a complex phenomena or process and facilitates communication amongst stakeholders. This is currently lacking in strategies.

Are you aware of any legislations, strategies or policies that are inconsistent with sustainable development or that impede progress toward sustainable development? That is, what are the current practices in place that do not support sustainable development?

*I am not aware of any strategy or legislation that is inconsistent with sustainable development. The current practices **that do not** support sustainable development are fishing in the open seas, land clearance and reef fishing (although there are by-laws for the rejuvenation of the reef, legislation for domestic fishing and policies for land clearance in place), land crab hunting and exporting at large amounts and the out of season shooting of pigeon and flying fox.*

QUESTIONS OR ISSUES EXPECTED FROM DISCUSSIONS

Private Sector and NGO's

1. What is your understanding of sustainable development.
Are you familiar with the concept?
2. Do you know or are you aware of what is in the Niue Integrated Strategic Plan?
3. Is your organization involved in the process of formulating the strategic plan and its ongoing updates?
4. What about current major development projects, such as the Fisheries project for example,..... were you consulted your views?
5. Have you or Did your group approach government or decision makers regarding your concerns?
6. What avenue did you use to raise your concerns?
7. Do you know whether donors have made consultation with civil societies and private sector?
8. Do you want to be consulted or you are happy with what is happening at the moment?

9. What do you think needs to be improved in the decision making process?
10. What is the role of your organization?
⇒ What/ How do you see your role in the decision making process?

Public Sector

1. Viewpoints on sustainable development and Niue's position?
2. What is available in Niue and what problems or gaps seen?
3. What key areas that we need to focus on?
4. Familiar with NISP and role or involvement?
5. Problems or gaps in your sector concerning NISP?
6. Do you think sustainable development is adequately addressed in your sector development?
7. How is your sector address sustainable development?
8. Niue is a party to number of international convention and treaties. Are we reaping the benefits?
9. What are doing right/wrong at the moment?
10. What areas to be improve at national level?
11. Vulnerability of your sector..what/how?

(questions were set for guidelines only – and more or less could be asked depending on mode of meeting and relevance to each sector)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Title :** Regional/National Consultant (RC/NC)
- Project :** Support the Formulation of National Sustainable Development Strategies in the Pacific : a regional approach (Phase 1)
- Duration :** Two months over the period 11 June 2006 to 10 August 2006

Duties, Responsibilities and output expectations:

The Regional/National Consultant will work at the regional/national level in order to contribute to and facilitate implementation of the Project : *National Support to the Formulation of National Sustainable Development Strategies in the Pacific : a regional approach*.

Under the overall supervision of the Chief of NIMO Branch of DESA/DSD and under the guidance from the International Consultant, the Regional/National Consultant (RC/NC) is responsible for the following tasks :

1. Preparation of a National Assessment Report – Due 31 July 2006

On the basis of a detail background paper and guidance document in the preparation of an NSDS, both authored by UNDESA, the RC/NC will prepare a National Assessment Report. In preparing the report, the RC/NC is expected to consult widely with key actors from government and international organizations as well as civil society representatives, in order to collect information, analyze and present findings in key areas of sustainable development strategy elaboration, such as:

Priorities and Targets

- a) Identify national priorities, goals and targets for sustainable development and the main challenges to achieve these ;
- b) Reflect on the vertical coherence of national priorities with regional and global commitments of relevance to sustainable development for the state;

Strategies

- c) Identify existing strategies, including national development strategies, poverty reduction strategies and sectoral strategies (e.g, for environment, desertification, climate change, energy and so forth) and reflect how these strategies relate to the sustainable development priorities, goals and targets identified above;

- d) Analyze the horizontal coherence amongst these strategies and related policies and plans Are they consistent with each other and consistent with sustainable development ?
- e) Identify, to the extent possible, any legislation, strategies and policies that are inconsistent with sustainable development or that may impede progress toward sustainable development;

Indicators

- f) Identify any sets of indicators used for decision making. Do these include e.g., indicators for sustainable development or MDG indicators? Who uses them?
- g) For what specific purpose are the indicators used – for gathering information before making a decision? For monitoring implementation of strategies or plans?

Institutional framework

- h) Identify the key institutional actors who are or should be involved in developing and implementing national sustainable development strategies; specify the mandates, their institutional relationship with each other and the degree to which they work together;
- i) Identify any inter-agency mechanisms for suitable development, such as national councils or task forces, ad hoc expert groups, functional commissions, and so forth. Specify their function, scope and effectiveness;
- j) Indicate the extent to which civil society² has been involved in decision-making at national and local levels. Are there specific mechanisms for this purpose? What are the modalities for their participation? (consistent with the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation, the consultant may wish to pay particular attention to the involvement of youth in decision-making.)

Key guiding the documents are expected to include the following: Guidance in preparing a national Sustainable Development Strategy (UNDESA, 2002); relevant National Assessment Reports prepared for WSSD(2002) and the Ten-Year Review of the BPoA (Mauritius, 2005); and the current NSDS and/or Regional Position for the Mauritius Conference; the outcome Statement and Executive Summary to the Report of the Pacific Regional Meeting to follow-up on the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy (Apia, 2005); the Pacific plan (Port Moresby Summit, 2005); and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, with particular reference to its application to States in the Pacific Region.

The consultant (RC/NC) may, if necessary, request UNDESSA to approve and support the travel of the international consultant to the capital in order to provide assistance.

The National Assessment Report is expected to be about 30 pages long. Appropriately indexed and source. It should also contain an Executive Summary, Table of Content and a chapter highlighting main conclusions and recommendations.

The first draft is due on the 17 July 2006 to UNDESSA/DSD and the international consultant. The report should be refined and finalized with requested changes, and submitted in electronic copy, by 31 July 2006. All other relevant national reports and strategies should also be submitted electronically, if possible, or, if not, in hard copy.

The consultant (RC/NC) may be requested to revise the national assessment report to accommodate issues discussed at the Workshop on NSDS in Pacific SIDSX to be held from 4 – 5 May 2006.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is an eye opening experience for me being engaged by a overseas agency to carry out such an important assignment.

Thank you, Mr Sauni Tongatule, Director of the department of Environment and his staff for providing me with the opportunity by recommending my name through the hierarchy and thank you UNDESA for recruiting me.

The joy and satisfaction through encouragements and invaluable help provided by my niece Josie Tamate during the preparation, fact finding and brainstorming as I draw on her experience and expertise as we attack this assignment. To my other niece Gloria Talagi-Llines, thanks for your support, assistance and encouragements throughout the duration of this assignment. It is very difficult not to involve both Josie and Gloria; (both qualified economists) in this assignment because of their positions in government; but hey, this is Niue. We are small and a one big family nation! Seriously, I do not believe we are delving into any national secrets, but reporting the facts as they are and assessing situations to what we have seen read and heard. Accordingly, I am very privilege to have the two best brains to pick from as I toil to express these views in the report. Thank you very much to the two of you.

I must also thank all of you that willingly allow me your time and your valuable contributions towards the preparation and content of this report. Thank you.

Finally, my gratitude to my family for their help and understanding for supporting me throughout this assignment. Especially, the inspiration that I drew from my 6 months old grand daughter KarisMa, as she sat on my lap trying to type as I double-up a babysitter while punching the keyboard preparing this report. Perhaps she is trying to tell me something about the importance of this report which will have an effect on her and generations to come.

Thank you to all of you.

Kia monuina.

Tongiavalu Pihigia