



Navigating Resilience: Examining Social Policies for Climate Change Adaptation in Coastal Communities of Fiji

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Abstract: Fiji's social policy frameworks aim to enhance coastal communities' resilience to climate change effects. Fiji, a Pacific Island nation vulnerable to rising sea levels and severe weather events, has established itself as a leader in pioneering climate adaptation techniques. The research examines significant national programs, including the National Adaptation Plan, the National Climate Change Policy, and the Climate Change Act, investigating their alignment with overarching development objectives. It examines Fiji's holistic strategy, which includes legislative initiatives, community-driven adaptation programs, and collaborations among multiple stakeholders. The study highlights the complex balance between protecting coastal communities and preserving traditional land use practices, emphasizing the importance of grassroots approaches and interdisciplinary collaboration for achieving sustainable outcomes. The findings offer crucial insights for international scholars, practitioners, and policymakers addressing climate change issues, providing a framework for effective policy formulation that addresses the complexities of legislation, community engagement, and stakeholder collaboration in confronting climate-related threats.

Keywords: Climate Change Adaptation, Coastal Communities, Social Policies, Resilience, and Fiji

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INTRODUCTION

The IPCC (2022) has identified that coastal communities worldwide are particularly susceptible to the challenges posed by climate change, with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Fiji being particularly susceptible (Pörtner et al., 2022). Effective adaptation strategies have become increasingly necessary due to the threat posed by changing weather patterns, intensifying cyclones, and rising sea levels to cultural heritage and livelihoods (Nunn et al., 2021). To improve resilience and facilitate climate change adaptation in coastal communities, 'Adaptation to climate change' suggests more modifications in the long run (Vogel & Henstra, 2015). Efforts that address the causes of vulnerability and promote social justice and environmental integrity are examples of these kinds of reforms, which may be categorised as sustainable development (Eriksen et al., 2011). This research investigates the social policies implemented in Fiji. The Government of Fiji (2018) has been at the forefront of global climate change discussions, advocating for more decisive international action and concurrently devising domestic policies to address local impacts. Fiji is an archipelagic nation in the South Pacific. Coastal communities in the country, which account for a substantial portion of the population, are confronted with various challenges, such as the potential loss of traditional lands, saline intrusion, and coastal erosion (Piggott-McKellar et al., 2019).

The research investigates the relationship between social policy and climate change adaptation, with a particular emphasis on how government initiatives, community-based approaches, and international partnerships contribute to the development of resilience. The effectiveness of various policies, such as the National Adaptation Plan, the Climate Change Bill, and local-level interventions, will be examined (Ministry of Economy, Republic of Fiji, 2018). Additionally, we will investigate how these policies effectively address the distinctive social, cultural, and economic contexts of Fijian coastal communities. This research aims to enhance the global conversation on climate change adaptation in SIDS and coastal regions by critically evaluating the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from Fiji's approach. It will emphasise the necessity of empowering local communities through inclusive, participatory policy-making processes that integrate traditional knowledge with modern scientific approaches. Valuable insights into the intricate interplay between social policy, environmental challenges, and community resilience are provided by the experiences of Fiji's coastal communities as the global community confronts the escalating impacts of climate change.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical basis for this study is informed by the understanding that sustainable adaptation, which combines climate change adaptation with sustainable development principles, provides a viable approach to building climate-related resilience. This strategy is

especially crucial for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Fiji, where the impacts of climate change are severe and inextricably linked to development challenges and efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Three interrelated and overlapping perspectives underpin this framework. These are,

Socio-ecological systems theory emphasizes the interdependence of social and ecological systems as crucial for understanding the complex dynamics of coastal communities in the context of climate change (Adger, 2000). The adaptive governance notion emphasises the significance of adaptable, multi-level

governing structures in addressing climate change consequences, as evidenced by Fiji's numerous policy tools and institutional frameworks (Folke et al., 2005). The community-based adaptation approach recognizes the significance of local knowledge and community engagement in developing effective adaptation methods, as reflected in Fiji's policies (Reid et al., 2009).

These theoretical perspectives, woven together, provide a veritable prism for examining Fiji's social policies for climate change adaptation, considering the interactions between national-level policies, local community activities, and the larger socio-ecological context (Fig 1).

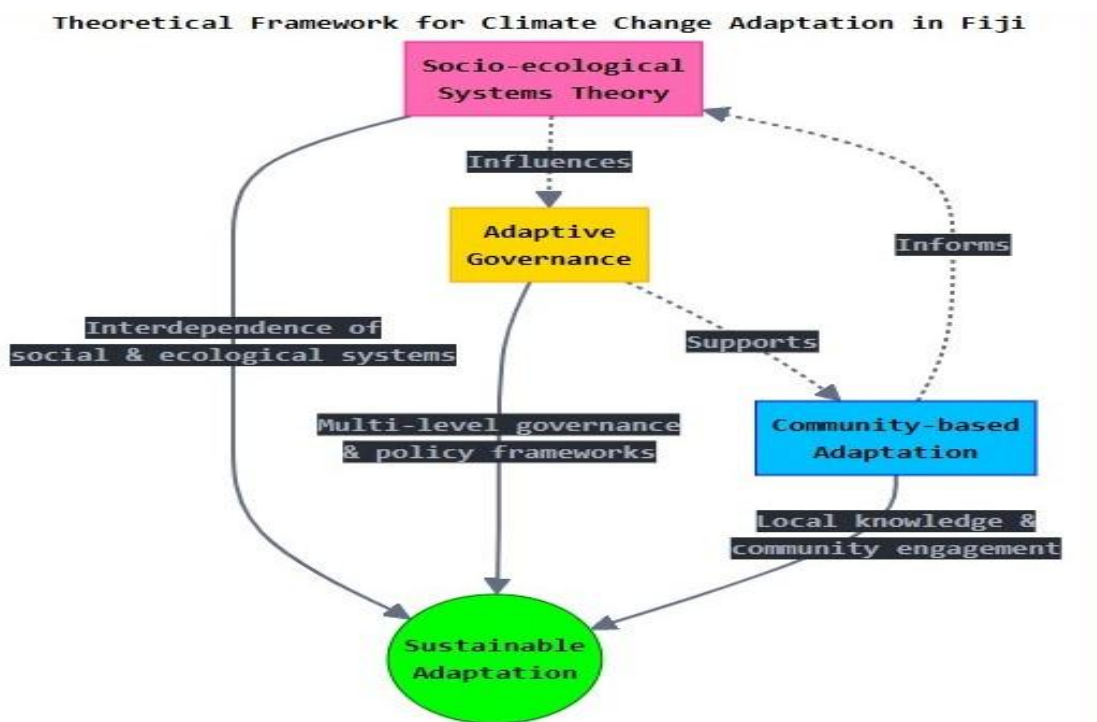


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework for Climate Change Adaptation in Fiji
Source: Authors' Compilation

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a comprehensive policy analysis methodology to examine Fiji's social policies related to climate change adaptation, with a particular focus on coastal communities. The research methodology focused on a comprehensive review and analysis of key policy documents and legislative frameworks that influence Fiji's climate change response. The principal documents examined comprised the National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030, Climate Change Act 2021, National Adaptation Plan 2018, Fiji's Low Emission Development Strategy 2018-2050, National Development Plan 2017-2036, Green Growth Framework for Fiji, Environment Management Act 2005, along with relevant implementation roadmaps and strategies.

The analytical framework was built on three interconnected theoretical perspectives: socio-ecological systems theory, adaptive governance, and community-based adaptation strategies. This theoretical framework facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the intricate linkages between social and ecological systems in coastal communities while accounting for the influence of multi-tiered governance structures and indigenous knowledge in climate adaptation methods.

The analysis involved qualitatively evaluating policy documents, concentrating on their aims, implementation methods, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Essential metrics and indicators were derived from official reports and documents, encompassing renewable energy generation

statistics from Energy Fiji Limited (EFL) annual reports and emission reduction objectives from Fiji's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). The research utilized a multi-criteria analysis method to assess policy efficacy, considering elements such as alignment with national and global objectives, implementation obstacles, finance strategies, and stakeholder involvement.

The research encompassed an analysis of institutional frameworks and coordination mechanisms instituted under diverse policies, including the National Climate Change Coordination Committee and the Cabinet Committee on Climate and Disaster Risk. This research facilitated the evaluation of governance frameworks and execution strategies for climate adaptation efforts in coastal communities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The island nation of Fiji has emerged and remained a leader in the fight against climate change, particularly among Pacific Island States. As the leading nation in international climate discussions, Fiji achieved remarkable progress during its leadership of COP23 towards implementing the Paris Agreement. In addition, the country was the driving force behind two historic projects, the Ocean Pathway Partnership and the Talanoa Call for Action. As a result of its persistent dedication to an all-encompassing, multi-sector approach, Fiji has been prosperous in these endeavours. To accomplish common climatic objectives, this strategy considers a variety of viewpoints and makes the most of the chances for collaboration across different groups (NCCP, 2018).

Adaptation to climate change in coastal communities of Fiji may also be the focus of more sector-specific strategies or initiatives at the local level. Other rules and actions may be added to the list, but the ones on the list are crucial. This research will focus on the most critical coastal adaptation and social policy issues.

National Climate Change Policy (2018-2030)

Overview

Since establishing its inaugural National Climate Change Policy in 2012, Fiji has demonstrated a substantial commitment to mitigating the impacts of climate change. These efforts have focused on enhancing resilience and integrating climate and disaster risk considerations into development planning and implementation processes. This approach aligns with national priorities and aspirations. The simultaneous adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and ratification of the Paris Agreement in 2015 marked a significant milestone. Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon characterised these as the 'twin

plans for transformative progress by 2030'(NCCP, 2018). The NCCP distinguishes itself as a landmark policy for Fiji through its unwavering emphasis on the Fijian populace. This focus extends beyond mere consideration of welfare, encompassing recognition of the citizenry's capacity to spearhead progress and actualize innovative solutions. The policy's significance lies in its dual approach: addressing the immediate well-being of Fijians while simultaneously acknowledging and harnessing their potential as agents of transformative change in climate action implementation (NCCP, 2018). The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) is a seminal document characterised by its proactive and evidence-driven approach to climate risk mitigation. This policy framework explicitly addresses the unique climate vulnerabilities confronting Fiji and its populace. The NCCP's role in establishing the foundational framework for Fiji's national climate change legislation is particularly significant (Fig 1.2). Moreover, it delineates the most comprehensive strategic blueprint for Fiji's implementation of its Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement. The policy further articulates a clear mandate for the development and implementation of Fiji's National Adaptation Process and Plan, as well as the operation of Fiji's Low Emissions Development Strategy. This multifaceted approach underscores the NCCP's pivotal role in shaping Fiji's climate governance and adaptive capacity (NCCP, 2018).

Re-establishment and New Formation under NCCP.

1. The NCCP re-establishes and updates the National Climate Change Coordination Committee.
2. It creates a Cabinet Committee on Climate and Disaster Risk to oversee Fiji's long-term climate strategy.
3. A National Private Sector Advisory Board was established to engage the private sector in climate response.
4. Climate change focal points are to be created within all line ministries.
5. The NCCP aims to enhance inter-government accountability for climate action.
6. It proposes a National Climate Change Act to strengthen Fiji's legal mandate for climate response.
7. The policy aligns with Sustainable Development Goals and various national and international commitments.
8. Fiji's resilience approach depends on proactive international engagement and global response.
9. The NCCP recognizes the interconnected nature of climate impacts and the need for collective action.
10. Fiji commits to integrating ocean protection into domestic and foreign policy, aiming to influence international policy.

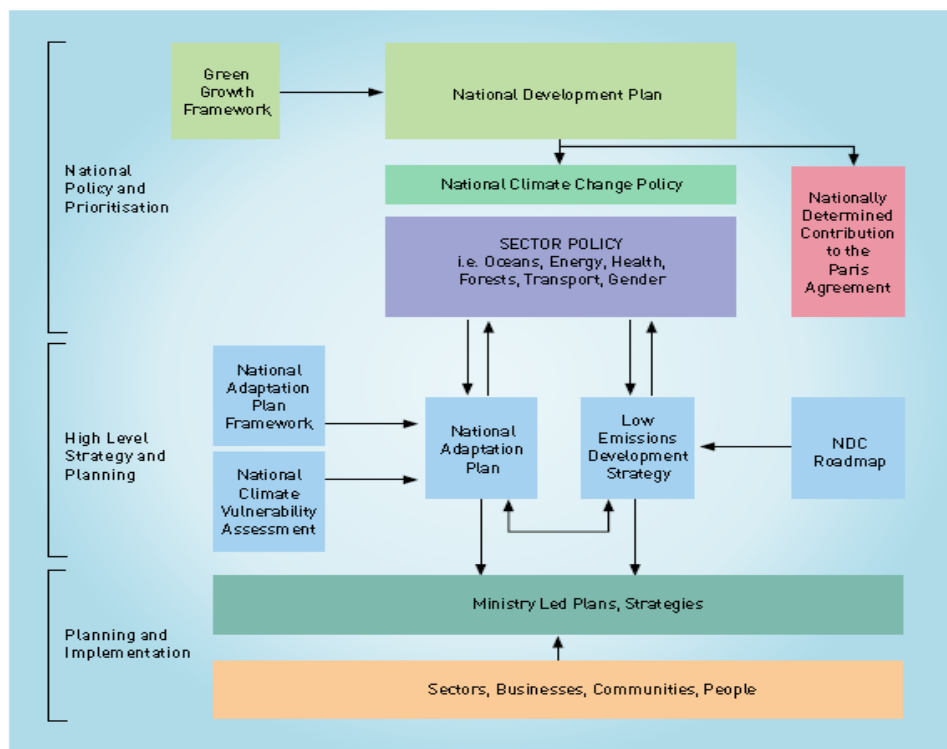


Figure 2: Relationship between Key inter-ministerial Policies and Plans relevant to NCCP
Source: NCCP (2018). National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030, Government of Fiji.

Strengths

1. **Holistic Vision:** The policy sets a long-term vision for 2050, aiming for a resilient and prosperous Fiji with a net-zero emissions economy. This demonstrates a forward-thinking approach that aligns with global climate goals.
2. **Integration with National and Global Goals:** It aligns with Fiji's National Development Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement, ensuring coherence across various levels of planning and implementation.
3. **Multi-Sectoral Approach:** The policy emphasizes a “woven approach” to development, integrating efforts across government, civil society, and the private sector. This is essential for addressing the interconnected nature of climate change impacts.
4. **Focus on Human Rights and Inclusivity:** It is a human rights-based and gender-responsive policy, ensuring that climate actions do not exacerbate societal inequalities and vulnerabilities.
5. **Evidence-Based Decision Making:** Emphasis on using the best available science and multi-criteria analysis for decision-making is crucial for effective and adaptive climate strategies.
6. **Commitment to Capacity Building:** The policy prioritizes national capacity development and integrated learning, recognising the importance of building local expertise and institutional strength.
7. To support these policy options, Fiji has also developed a postgraduate-level Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation programme, with the objective of training professionals with a clear

understanding of climate variability. These will provide the monitoring, evaluation, and research capacity to sustain and enhance data collection, informing policy changes as necessary.

Weaknesses

- **Implementation Challenges:** Despite the comprehensive framework, implementation might face significant challenges, including financial constraints, capacity limitations, and potential resistance from various stakeholders.
- **Over-Reliance on External Funding:** The policy acknowledges the need for sustainable financing but might be overly dependent on international aid and investments, which can be uncertain and fluctuating with detrimental effects to the sustainability of projects
- **Broad Objectives:** Some of the policy objectives and strategies are broad, which could make it challenging to measure progress and ensure accountability. More specific and measurable targets might enhance the effectiveness of the policy.
- **Potential for Policy Overlap:** With numerous committees and frameworks mentioned (e.g., National Climate Change Committee, Low Emissions Development Strategy Steering Committee), there is a risk of overlapping responsibilities and bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Opportunities

More international help and cooperation may be on the horizon for Fiji if it takes the lead in the Pacific

area in combating climate change. By fostering new forms of cooperation and leveraging local expertise, the strategy has the potential to promote green growth and innovation, ultimately benefiting both the economy and the environment. The approach can increase community support and provide more culturally relevant outcomes by including local communities and honouring traditional knowledge.

Threat

The escalating magnitude of climate change effects may surpass the adaptation and mitigation measures specified in the strategy, especially if global emissions are not substantially reduced. Fiji's economy, which relies primarily on tourism and agriculture, is highly susceptible to the effects of climate change. The policy must provide enough protection and diversification of these industries. The execution of climate policy may be disrupted by political changes, as observed in several other nations.

Climate Change Bill 2021

The Climate Change Act was adopted by parliament on September 23, 2021, and will go into effect as soon as it is published in the Gazette. It establishes the legislative basis for the country's mitigation, adaptation, and risk management activities related to catastrophe. The Fijian parliament enacted the Climate Change Act 2021, a comprehensive and ambitious new climate law. This type of framework, climate legislation, is being developed worldwide to shape and coordinate governmental responses to climate change in accordance with the global Paris Agreement. Fiji's example aligns with global best practices and can enhance domestic climate governance, directing international climate funding to regions of need. Fiji has become the seventh country in the world - and the first Big Ocean State - to establish domestic legislation that includes a net-zero emissions target by 2050 by enacting the Climate Change Act 2021. The Climate Change Act of 2021 aims to establish a system for measuring, reporting, and verifying greenhouse gas emissions, overseeing and controlling the national response to climate change, developing a comprehensive response, and addressing other relevant issues (CCA, 2021). The Act focuses on carbon budgets, the framework for establishing a carbon market, climate-induced mobility, nature-based solutions, the legal acknowledgment of marine borders related to sea level rise, climate financing, and international resilience-building (CCA, 2021). In general, an individual who commits a violation under the Act may face a maximum penalty of a fine up to FJD\$750,000 or imprisonment for a maximum period of 10 years, or both (CCA, 2021, Section 103). Fiji has established itself as a global frontrunner in addressing climate change by enacting the Act and serving as a role model for other countries. By adopting legally binding targets at the national level and assuming responsibility for the well-being of the oceans and the planet, Fiji has paved the way for other nations to emulate its approach.

National Adaptation Plan Policy (NAP) 2018

The Fiji National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030 (NCCP) outlines the overarching vision, principles, institutional structures, strategies, and goals for addressing climate change challenges in Fiji. Following the Cancun Adaptation Framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the objectives of the NAP process are to mitigate climate change vulnerability by enhancing adaptive capacity and resilience, as well as incorporating adaptation into policies and development planning processes and structures (UNFCCC, 2011). It also improves the Fijian Government's long-term capacity to fulfil the rights that it guarantees to its citizens in the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji. The NCCP, or National Climate Change Policy, is Fiji's initial expression of its national policy on climate change following the Paris Agreement. It serves as a foundation for Fiji's Nationally Determined Contribution and its long-term development plan for climate resilience. Additionally, the NCCP establishes obligations and frameworks for Fiji's reporting to the UNFCCC (NAP, 2018). The original NCCP highlights the hazards that climate change poses to infrastructure and advocates for the more comprehensive integration of climate change projections into development planning processes involving infrastructure investment (NAP, 2018). Infrastructure's vulnerability to climate change necessitates its incorporation into the NAP process, as the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji provides numerous guarantees related to infrastructure. For example, Section 35 ensures that every individual has access to sufficient and accessible sanitation, while Section 36 guarantees that every individual has access to clean and safe water in sufficient quantities (2013 Constitution). The issuance of the NAP document did not conclude with the national adaptation plan and procedure. Subsequently, a macro-level monitoring and evaluation framework was established to oversee the five-year implementation period of the NAP. Furthermore, a communication strategy and a financing strategy were devised. The Government, development partners, and the private sector continued to implement the NAP concurrently. Analysing the linkages between the NAP and the Fijian Government's Low Emission Development Strategy was another critical stage in determining co-benefits. A critical initial step in identifying triple-win actions, which address the requirements of development, mitigation, and adaptation, was the establishment of co-benefits (NAP, 2018).

Fiji's Low Emission Development Strategy 2018-2050

Low Emission Development Strategies (LEDS) were proposed during the period leading up to the UNFCCC climate discussions in Copenhagen at COP15. The Copenhagen Accord states that a development plan with minimal emissions is essential for sustainable development (UNFCCC 2009). As one of the first SIDS and developing countries to comprehensive LEDS, Fiji

is eager to implement these principles to reach the crucial objective of keeping the global temperature increase below 1.5°C (FLEDS (2018)). The Fiji LEDES is organised in the following steps: first, the local and international framework; second, low-emission scenarios for specific sectors; third, connections to adaptive, social, environmental, and economic factors; and lastly, the

LEDS's governance, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E). The Fiji LEDES outlines comprehensive plans for thorough decarbonization in the country's electrical and energy sectors, as well as in transportation (air, sea, and land), AFOLU (agriculture, forestry, and other land use), blue carbon (coastal wetlands), and waste management.

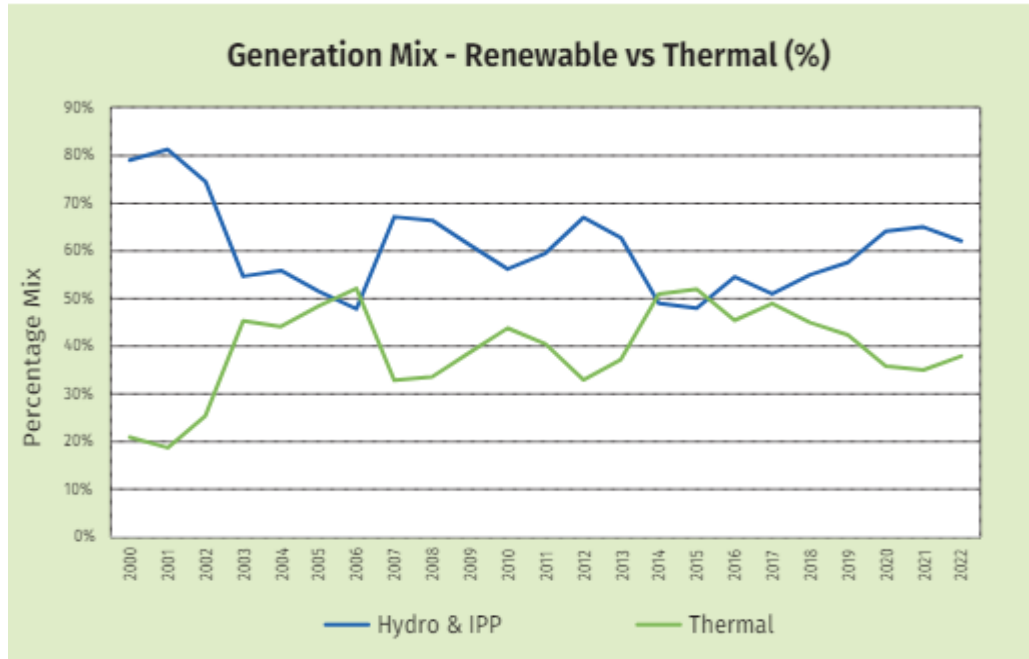


Figure 3: Electricity generation by source (EFL)
Source: EFL (2022). Annual Report, Suva, Fiji

Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of renewable energy sources compared to thermal energy sources from 2000 to 2022, as shown in this line graph. The blue line depicts Hydro and Independent Power Producers (IPPs), while the green line shows thermal energy. An impressive 80% in 2000 marks the beginning of the Hydro & IPP line, which typically fluctuates and reaches a low of 60% in 2022. Starting at a modest 20% in 2000,

the Thermal line proliferates until 2003, after which it varies between 30% and 50% for the remainder of the time. Multiple points of intersection between the two lines show that the primary energy source has changed throughout time. Over the 22 years shown in the graph, there was an overall trend toward a more even distribution of renewable and thermal energy production (EFL, 2022).

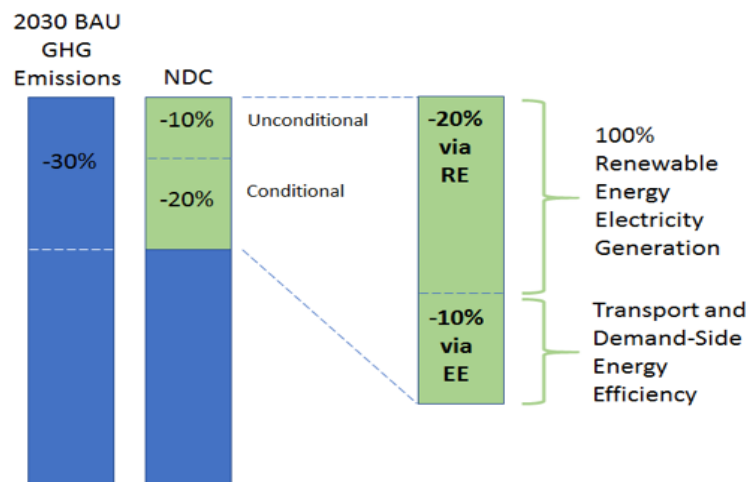


Figure 4: Fiji's NDC Emission Reduction Target
Source: EFL (2016). Annual Report. Cited from Fiji's Low Emission Development Strategy 2018-2050.

In Figure 4, a bar chart compares the 2030 BAU GHG Emissions with the NDC objectives. The blue BAU bar indicates a 30% rise in emissions. The NDC bar comprises a blue component, a 20% conditional decrease, and an unconditional 10% reduction. You can see a more detailed breakdown of the NDC reductions on the right side. For 100% Renewable Energy Electricity Generation, the reduction is 20% via RE (Renewable Energy), and for Transport and Demand-Side Energy Efficiency is 10% via EE (Energy Efficiency). The dotted lines illustrate the interconnections between these parts and how they contribute to the overall NDC goal (EFL, 2016).

Fiji's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Implementation Roadmap 2017-2030

Regarding the greenhouse gas (GHG) baseline, with 2013 serving as the reference year and prospective mitigation efforts, Fiji's present Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is energy sector specific. In 2030, under a Business as Usual (BAU) baseline scenario, the NDC aims to reduce CO₂ emissions by 30% through energy efficiency measures implemented across the economy and the pursuit of 100% renewable energy power generation. To achieve the revolutionary shift mandated by the NDC, the NDC Implementation Roadmap 2017–2030 aims to outline a timetable with specific mitigation activities and funding requirements (NDC, 2017). Electricity generation and transmission, demand-side energy efficiency, and transportation are the three divisions of the energy sector that the NDC Implementation Roadmap uses to categorise mitigation efforts. There are three time periods in the roadmap that address the implementation of the identified mitigation actions: short-term (2017–2020), medium-term (2021–2025), and long-term (2026–2030). Meanwhile, every mitigation action in the roadmap closely aligns with current national strategies, plans, and policies (NDC, 2017).

Compared to the BAU baseline in 2030, the total expected yearly CO₂ abatement achieved by the mitigation initiatives specified in the roadmap amounts to 627,000 tCO₂/yr. With an additional \$119 million spent on mitigation measures between 2014 and 2017, the total energy sector expenditure needed to reach this level of CO₂ reduction is projected to reach \$2.97 billion from 2017 to 2030 (NDC, 2017). Henceforth, Fiji has laid out a detailed and ambitious plan in its NDC Implementation Roadmap 2017–2030 to reach its climate targets set out in the Paris Agreement. The tiny island developing state of Fiji may only emit a minuscule fraction of the world's greenhouse gases, but that won't stop it from setting an example. The energy sector's particular activities and investments are laid out in the plan, which aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30% by 2030 through measures such as increasing the use of renewable energy and improving energy efficiency. Building governance structures, monitoring systems, and funding methods to guarantee successful

implementation and ongoing adaptation is crucial to this endeavour. In addition to meeting its national objectives, Fiji hopes to set an example for global climate action by demonstrating how sustainable development can be accomplished without harming the environment by establishing defined standards and a planned approach.

National Development Plan 2017-2036

With the goal of "Transforming Fiji," the National Development Plan (NDP) lays out the future of Fiji and the steps that all Fijians must take to reach our maximum potential. Two long-term plans for Fiji's future have never been in place before. One covers 2017–2036, and the other covers 2017–2021. Collaboratively, the 20-Year Development Plan lays out a comprehensive strategy for long-term change, while the 5-Year Development Plan lays out a detailed action agenda with measurable goals and objectives. Participation from businesses, nonprofits, community organisations, government agencies, and the public helped shape this progressive NDP through a countrywide consultation process. It represents the hopes and dreams of the Fijians and the determination of their government to make these dreams a reality. The National Development Plan (NDP, 2017) is based on the principle of inclusive socio-economic development, and its policies aim to increase access to programmes, services, and infrastructural networks so that all Fijians may benefit from them and help change the country. Integrating climate change issues into Fiji's larger development objectives, the National Development Plan 2017–2036 offers a holistic strategy for sustainable growth (NDP, 2017). This lofty plan rests on sustainable resource management, a shift to renewable energy, and climate resilience in critical industries. Its goals include fostering green growth practices, increasing catastrophe preparation, and diversifying the economy with climate-resilient enterprises. In addition to outlining tactics to get climate funding for adaptation projects, the strategy portrays Fiji as a global champion for small island developing nations in climate discussions (NDP, 2017). Fiji hopes to ensure people are involved and can adjust to its climate response by using public education campaigns and robust monitoring systems. Understanding the inextricable link between environmental protection and economic growth in the context of climate change, Fiji has adopted an integrated strategy to attain sustainable development and combat the urgent problems caused by the phenomenon.

Green Growth Framework for Fiji: A Better Fiji for All

The Fijians' shifting consumption and production habits are driving the country's growth trajectory, worsened by external factors like the global economic crisis, rising food and fuel prices, and the effects of climate change (Medina et al., 2020). If this pattern persists, sustainable development will fail to address the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental concerns. Restoring the balance and ensuring future development is sustainable and sustained

is now a must, not a luxury, especially while Fiji is still a relatively unspoilt island nation. A procedure must be put in place immediately (GGFF, 2014).

An evolving document, the Green Growth Framework for Fiji: Restoring the Balance in Development that is Sustainable for our Future, was created and released in August 2014. The national development blueprints before it, such as the 2010–2014 Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development and the People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress, are meant to be bolstered and amplified by this framework. The following are the guiding principles of the Green Growth Framework, which aim to support the vision of A Better Fiji for All and consider regional and global advancements in green growth (GGFF, 2014):

1. Reducing carbon footprints at all levels.
2. Improving resource utilisation and productivity (doing more with less).
3. Developing a new integrated approach, with all stakeholders collaborating and working together for the common good. The cross-cutting nature of issues relating to sustainable development requires harmony and synergy in formulating strategies.
4. Strengthening socio-cultural education of responsible environmental stewardship and civic responsibility.
5. Increasing the adoption of comprehensive risk management practices.
6. Supporting the adoption of sound environmental auditing of past and planned developments to support initiatives that provide economic benefits and improve the environmental situation.
7. Enhancing structural reforms in support of fair competition and efficiency; and
8. Incentivising investment in the rational and efficient use of natural resources.

Given that the overarching goal of the Green Growth Framework is to hasten sustainable, inclusive, and integrated growth, it stands to reason that different Thematic Areas would inevitably intersect with one another. The following topics have been classified according to the three pillars (GGFF, 2014):

- Environmental Pillar: Building Resilience to Climate Change and Disasters, waste management and sustainable island and ocean resources.
- Social Pillar: Inclusive Social Development, Food Security and Freshwater Resources and Sanitation Management,
- Economic pillars: Energy Security, sustainable transport, Technology and Innovation and Greening Tourism and Manufacturing Industries.

The Green Growth Framework for Fiji is a tool that aims to accelerate the integration and inclusivity of sustainable development. It will inspire action at all levels, thereby strengthening environmental resilience, building social improvement, reducing poverty,

supporting economic growth, and strengthening the capacity to withstand and manage the adverse effects of climate change (GGFF, 2014). Green growth was stimulated by the Green Growth Framework, established to enhance the utilisation of natural resources, mitigate environmental risks, and encourage socially inclusive development. Population growth, urbanisation, unsustainable consumption and resource use, infrastructure deficits, and an increasing frequency of natural disasters due to a changing climate increase the risk of food and energy insecurity and threaten economic and social progress. If left unchecked, the overexploitation of natural resources, invasive species, inadequate waste management, and increasing pollution damage will result in a steady decline of natural capital, particularly biodiversity.

Environment Management Act 2005:

The Environmental Management Act 2005 provides the legal basis for environmental protection and management, passed on 11 March 2005. The act aims to promote the sustainable use and development of natural resources and highlight topics of national concern for the Fiji Islands, as outlined in the subsection (EMA, 2005). The Act mentioned that authorities must prioritise several national objectives in managing natural and physical resources under this legislative framework. These include the conservation of coastal ecosystems, wetlands, lakes, and rivers; the safeguarding of natural landscapes and distinctive features; the protection of Indigenous flora and fauna habitats; the preservation of ancestral lands, waters, sacred sites, and cultural treasures belonging to Indigenous Fijians; and the safeguarding of human life and health (EMA, 2005). Furthermore, the utilisation of natural resources necessitates careful consideration of multiple factors. These encompass the rights and interests of traditional resource owners or guardians, the preservation of amenity values, the recognition of ecosystems' intrinsic worth, the conservation of buildings and sites with significant heritage value, the maintenance of environmental quality, and an acknowledgement of the finite nature of natural resources (EMA, 2005). This comprehensive approach balances development needs with environmental conservation and cultural preservation, ensuring sustainable resource management for present and future generations.

CONCLUSION

Fiji has shown strong dedication and leadership in tackling climate change issues through comprehensive policies and legal frameworks. The National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030, the Climate Change Act 2021, the National Adaptation Plan, and other efforts constitute a multifaceted approach to building resilience and responding to the impacts of climate change in coastal areas. These policies prioritise incorporating climate factors into national development planning, supporting sustainable resource management, and encouraging community involvement. Fiji's strategy is

consistent with global best practices in climate governance, balancing mitigation efforts with adaptation plans suited to SIDS' particular vulnerabilities. However, funding limits, capacity limitations, and the need for efficient coordination across many sectors and stakeholders pose hurdles to implementing these policies. Despite these hurdles, Fiji's proactive approach to climate policy formulation establishes the country as a pioneer among SIDS in climate action, providing valuable lessons for other countries facing comparable climate-related dangers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Investing in training and education programmes that create local knowledge in climate change adaptation is essential to ensure that communities can successfully implement and maintain adaptation measures. This will enhance local capacity building.
2. Make monitoring and assessment more effective: Create reliable ways to monitor how healthy policies are being implemented so that management may adjust, and policies can be fine-tuned.
3. Diversify funding sources: To lessen dependence on external funding and guarantee the sustainable execution of adaptation solutions, look at new financing options like climate insurance schemes or green bonds.
4. Encourage collaboration across sectors: For a more comprehensive and coordinated response to climate change adaptation, it is essential to fortify ties between various government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the commercial sector.
5. Integrate traditional knowledge: The importance of traditional practices in constructing resilience should be acknowledged, and adaptation plans should include indigenous and local knowledge.
6. Make thorough adaptation strategies for essential industries, including agriculture, fishing, and tourism, considering the specific problems encountered by each.
7. Raise the level of regional cooperation: For more effective climate discussions on a global scale, Pacific Island governments must work together, sharing experiences and resources.
8. Prioritise the creation of climate-resilient infrastructure: This should be a top priority, especially in coastal regions that are particularly susceptible to the effects of climate change.
9. Public awareness campaigns: Make more of an effort to teach people about the effects of climate change and how to adapt to it so that they can help build a greener future.
10. Evaluate and update policies regularly: Create a system to evaluate and update climate policies regularly so they can adapt to new climate issues.

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