

**BRIEFING NOTE: HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE
ON THE PACIFIC VOICE FOR A JUST
TRANSITION, JOB CREATION, AND
CLIMATE RESILIENCE:
7 NOVEMBER 2017**

This event, organized by Fiji, in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), convened on 7 November 2017 in Bonn, Germany, on the sidelines of the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 23) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The event, moderated by Sarah Kelly, Deutsche Welle, aimed to provide a platform to discuss interlinkages between acting on climate change and promoting job creation and social inclusion, and to share experiences on fostering a just workforce transition, especially in the Pacific region.

Noting that countries come to the COP with different expectations and needs, Inia Seruiratu, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, and National Disaster Management and High-Level Climate Champion, Fiji, emphasized that for his country, COPs are a place to be heard, share experiences and learn from other communities. He further outlined that while Fiji has a comparatively diversified economy, it still needs assistance to strengthen its macro-economic resilience. In conclusion, Seruiratu underlined that climate action brings about great opportunities to tackle unemployment and expressed hope that new technologies, for example on adaptation, would provide job opportunities, especially for young people and women.

Paul Watkinson, France, recalled France's pledge to become climate neutral by 2050 and to close all its coal power plants by 2022, emphasizing that this requires retraining the workforce and rethinking the education system. He concluded by underlining that implementing the Paris Agreement at the local level is key to achieving a deep transformation.

Siham Ayad, Morocco, highlighted the importance of creating a dynamic for change across society and all economic sectors, and reflecting on how wealth is defined. She emphasized inclusive growth, "growth that is rich in jobs," as a key challenge for the future. Reflecting on COP 22, she recalled the success of the Climate Action Peer Exchange (CAPE), which brought together finance ministers to discuss fiscal policy measures for mitigation. She highlighted that including financial actors and systematically integrating climate change in policy planning is essential.

Paweł Sałek, Vice-Minister of Environment and Government Plenipotentiary for Climate Policy, Poland, looked ahead to his country hosting COP 24 in 2018 in Katowice, which will be Poland's third COP. He explained that the Silesian region has long been characterized by coal mining and other heavy industries, expressing hope that showcasing the ongoing transformation towards a greener economy in the region would inspire others to engage in similar transformations. He concluded by emphasizing Poland's hope that COP 24 would agree on an "implementation package" and welcomed assistance from previous COP presidencies in preparing for the conference.



L-R: **Tomoko Nishimoto**, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, ILO; **Paweł Sałek**, Vice-Minister of Environment and Government Plenipotentiary for Climate Policy, Poland; **Siham Ayad**, Morocco; **Paul Watkinson**, France; **Inia Seruiratu**, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, and National Disaster Management and High-Level Climate Champion, Fiji; and **Sarah Kelly**, Deutsche Welle



Tomoko Nishimoto, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, ILO

Tomoko Nishimoto, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, ILO, lauded the event for bringing together four COP presidencies as “a strong signal of the recognition of the importance of decent work,” noting that the principle has received increased attention in the last few years. She pointed to the ILO’s role as the custodian of international work standards and highlighted the tremendous impacts of climate change on employment conditions. She further indicated that discussions about “just transitions” tend to focus on mitigation-related employment, neglecting adaptation, despite the fact that decent work in the adaptation sector is an essential topic for regions such as the Pacific. In this regard, she underlined the importance of skills training to provide local communities with the capacity to engage in this growing sector. She concluded by pointing to the ILO’s tripartite governance structure, which favors dialogue and cooperation between governments, employers and workers as an effective mechanism to achieve vibrant social dialogue.

Following the opening remarks, panelists then engaged in discussions. Inia Seruiratu highlighted the importance of making critical adjustments to develop well-designed and relevant



Inia Seruiratu, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, and National Disaster Management and High-Level Climate Champion, Fiji



Siham Ayad, Morocco

policies. He further pointed to Fiji’s Young Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES), which provides youth with training, mentorship and financial grants to help them start or grow innovative businesses. Paul Watkinson recalled France’s engagement on advancing green human capital, and highlighted the country’s climate plan, which was adopted in July and foresees close cooperation with local territories. Siham Ayad pointed out that climate action needs to be country-driven, and highlighted the importance of considering climate resilience in the context of sustainable development more broadly. Semi Koroilavesau, Minister for Fisheries, Fiji, emphasized that climate change affects employment in island states in various ways, including through the effects of sea-level rise on the agricultural sector, and changes in the migratory patterns of fish species affecting the fishery sector.

During the ensuing discussions sparked by the moderator, participants raised questions related to: the workforce transition; the need to address the issue of decent work in the informal sector, which is mostly comprised of women and youth; and the need to consider the least developed countries in pursuing a “just transition.”



H.R.H. Princess Abze Djigma, Special Envoy to the President of Burkina Faso for SDGs and Climate Change, asked how we can ensure local administrations have the financial means to foster decent work.