



## PACIFIC REGIONAL GREEN GROWTH LEADERS' COALITION

### BACKGROUND

The Pacific regional Green Growth Leaders' Coalition (GGLC) was formed in 2012 as a joint initiative of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Oceania Regional Office and the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP). The GGLC is an active network of influential actors who lead inclusive policy discussions and drive sustainable development policy and legislative change at regional, national and subnational levels. GGLC members are drawn from a diverse range of countries and sectors including national governments, regional organisations, private sector and civil society. IUCN, with PLP, provides a range of technical, policy and other support to GGLC members.

The focal point of the GGLC is the annual Leaders' Retreat. The Retreat provides a space for identified leaders to meet and discuss sustainable growth issues and strategies in a safe, semi-formal environment. It also allows ideas to be shared and discussed around initiatives, policies and their implementation, and trusted connections to be developed across the region to provide technical and moral support for green growth initiatives. The meeting takes a distinctly Pacific form, making use of the *talanoa* process and methodology.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- The GGLC has been a key driver of sustainable development initiatives at national and subnational levels. Flagship achievements include the Ha'apai Green Growth Strategy, Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan and Fiji National Development Plan. Each of these plans and strategies has taken a substantially different form because of the assistance of the GGLC in their development, incorporating community consultations and broad social, environmental and economic objectives.
- The GGLC has also influenced key regional fora, as demonstrated by the green growth talks at the 2012 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting, and the introduction of the *talanoa* format at the 20th Melanesia Spearhead Group Leaders' Summit in 2016.

### Key Points

- The GGLC is an active network of leaders committed to promoting sustainable development in the Pacific region through blue and green economies.
- The GGLC and its annual Leaders' Retreat offer a unique space for leaders from government, regional, private sector and civil society bodies to reflect upon and respond to developmental challenges.
- Embodying a Pacific approach to development, the Leaders' Retreat is conducted as a multi-day *talanoa* session focused on promoting frank discussion and generating new ideas.
- The GGLC has successfully brought together members to engage in sustainable development reform efforts at regional, national and subnational levels including influencing development policies in Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu.

*"The talanoa space and the talanoa-style of reflection provided for participants to speak out loudly and honestly on issues"*

Kaliopate Tavola, GGLC Member

- Following the 2016 Annual Leaders' Retreat, IUCN, GGLC members, and other regional partners instigated a joint submission on coastal fisheries which led to coastal fisheries being confirmed as a key regional priority at the 47th Forum Leaders' Meeting in Pohnpei in 2016.
- Members from Fiji and Tonga have also attested that the relationships built through the GGLC helped to expedite the Tongan response to Fijian needs following Cyclone Winston.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Leaders from multiple sectors across the Pacific see value in a meeting format open to reflection and consensus where they can act as a collective rather than as individual representatives of countries and/or organisations.
- Commitment to sustainable developmental reform for regional leaders can have meaningful effects at national and subnational levels.
- Decision-makers in the Pacific are overwhelmingly male. GGLC membership base has addressed this issue by targeting women to offer their strengths and opinions, although they remain a minority. Representation from disabled and youth populations is also minimal.
- Achieving widespread regional reform remains difficult and requires a wider base of support, particularly from government leaders, as well as a willingness of members to commit to measurable aspirations.
- Coalitions assembling a diverse array of members require dedicated secretariat support from a central body to coordinate members and maintain momentum.

*The GGLC offers lessons for alternative, regional approaches to development in the Pacific region.*

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The GGLC offers lessons for alternative, regional approaches to development in the Pacific region by promoting collectivism and indigenous processes for deliberation.

- *Development efforts should embrace concepts of thinking and working politically, recognising that influence often lies within concentrated areas.* By bringing together persons of influence, the GGLC utilises the individual and united strengths of members as well as building support for collective action.
- *Indigenous approaches to sharing information and decision-making promote active participation.* The use of talanoa allows members to settle into the discussion process and remain open to learning without having to be focused on pre-determined talking points. Incorporating appropriate foreign processes, such as the Chatham House rule, assists to promote trust in the space.

- *Green and blue growth strategies represent the future development opportunities for the Pacific region.* They offer the resource-rich states of the Pacific a chance to determine the use of their resources, negotiate fair value for resources on global markets, and provide sustainable livelihoods and incomes. Development partners should continue to support governments in the implementation of policies and practical measures on blue and green growth - developmental progress that respects the *vanua/fanua* (land) and *moana* (ocean) that make up the Pacific region.

*By bringing together persons of influence, the GGLC utilises the individual and united strengths of members as well as building support for collective action.*

Halapua, S. (2002) 'The Talanoa Process: the Case of Fiji', East-West Centre, Honolulu <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan022610.pdf>

## About PLP

The Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) is a regional initiative of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that recognises the pivotal role of leadership in development. PLP builds, applies and shares knowledge on *developmental leadership* i.e. individuals, organisations and other stakeholders working together on inclusive policy and institutional change for the public good. PLP works at the regional level, including with regional organisations; and nationally and sub-nationally in four countries - Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga.

## PLP Briefing Notes

PLP Briefing Notes summarise key findings and lessons learned from research, coalitions and other activities implemented or supported by PLP and its partners. The aim is to inform policymakers and practitioners on emerging themes and issues in PLP's current work and consider the implications of these for wider development policy and practice.

For further information visit [www.plp.org.fj](http://www.plp.org.fj) or email [info@plp.org.fj](mailto:info@plp.org.fj)

