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A Slice of Paradise?

The Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: progress, pitfalls and potential solutions

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FOREWORD

The Oceania Development Network (ODN) currently based at the National University of Samoa (NUS) is the regional network partner of the Global Development Network (GDN). ODN brings together development researchers and scholars from the Pacific Islands and Australia and New Zealand. With support from GDN, it builds capacity for research among younger scholars and promotes excellence in research in development related matters. ODN Executive Committee has decided that it would be most useful to publish working papers on core development issues in the region as part of its encouragement of development related research in the Pacific islands. This Working Paper Number 1, “A Slice of Paradise? The Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: progress, pitfalls and potential solutions” is seen as an appropriate start to the working paper series. MDGs are part of the Millennium Declaration adopted by world leaders including Pacific islands country leaders and is the major development initiative for the third millennium. With the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Goals only 7 years away, Oceania is not on track to achieve the Goals. It is for this reason that in the first decade of the 21st Century that it is deemed appropriate that ODN's first working paper addresses this regions progress towards the MDGs and how best to expedite the process. Clearly partnerships and joint initiatives with the European Union, Australia, Japan, China and New Zealand among other developed countries and regions will be pivotal in reaching the Goals.

ODN Working Paper Number 1 is recommended reading for all those interested in development of Pacific island countries.

Afualo Dr Wood Salele
CHAIR ODN

A Slice of paradise? The Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific

Introduction

In 1950, astronomer Fred Hoyle speculated that once the first photographs of the Earth taken from space became available humanity's newfound understanding of – "the sheer isolation of the Earth" – would engender an ethos of internationalism amongst the people of our planet (Hoyle, cited in Marvin 2002, p 52). An ethos sufficient to put paid to nationalistic conflict and usher in an era where new technologies would be used to foster international cooperation and development. Photographs such as those that Hoyle described were first made public in 1966 yet, in the years that followed, history took a far different course from the idealised pathway to the future that Hoyle and others envisaged. Throughout the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s the Cold War was waged via proxy throughout the developing world and this – and other conflicts – exacted a cost of millions of lives lost, as well as entire nations condemned to cycles of violence and underdevelopment. In the 1970s conflict in the Middle East led to rising oil prices which, in turn, contributed to stagflation in much of the developed World, along with increased indebtedness in many developing countries.

Partially as a result of this, the 1980s saw the 'rolling back of the state' in most developed and developing countries (the so called 'Washington Consensus), with the consequence of rising hardship in many places; and the 1990s were marred by a series of financial crises that at different times plunged millions of people into poverty in South East Asia and Latin America. Throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s the environmental costs of (and limits to) development also became increasingly clear; and the 1980s and 90s saw the rise of the AIDS pandemic, and a corresponding catastrophic decline in life expectancies in some developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan

Africa. If – in the latter half of the 20th century – technology had indeed provided the World with the chance of a new internationalism, it was a challenge that the planet's people and their leaders failed to meet.

It was, in part, increasing awareness of this failure which led to the Millennium Summit being held at the United Nations in September 2000. At this summit 147 heads of State and Government (representing 189 countries) adopted the Millennium Declaration: a declaration which stated a shared commitment to work towards a world in which poverty was eliminated and the environment preserved.

The Millennium Declaration led to the formulation of a concise set of development goals, targets and indicators designed to be met by 2015. Collectively these are known as the Millennium Development Goals, and in the years since the Millennium Declaration these Goals have become a focal point for international development efforts.

As the Millennium Development Goals are truly international in scope it is not surprising that they have also become a key focus for development work in the Pacific. Multilateral development agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have intensified efforts to gather statistics relevant to the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific, as well as establishing development programmes geared around the Goals. Likewise, national development agencies like the New Zealand Agency for International

Development (NZAID) and Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) have started to incorporate aspects of the Millennium Development Goals into their development work in the region. Pacific island governments have also sought to incorporate these Goals, albeit to varying degrees, in their national development plans and strategies. At the same time, to varying extents, the Millennium Development Goals have also started to shape the discourse of NGOs and other civil society groups.

Such a renewed focus on human development and the environment in the Pacific is a welcome turn of events, particularly after the 1990s, which were characterised by economic reductionism along with development agencies redirecting their attention away from the Pacific and towards the transition economies in Eastern Europe. What remains to be seen now is whether the countries of the Pacific are able to meet (and exceed[1]) the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals. In the paper that follows we discuss the Millennium Development Goals in the context of the Pacific. The paper starts by detailing the Millennium Development Goals and discussing some of the ongoing, broad, debates around the Millennium Development Goals. The paper then summarises the current progress of the Pacific Island Countries with respect to the Millennium Development Goals. In the third section of the paper we outline what we see as being the main obstacles to meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific. And in the final section of the paper we provide some suggested means of overcoming these obstacles.

The paper does not, except in passing, discuss the Pacific Islands Forum regional initiative, "The Pacific Plan," as it will take some time before its programmes will be implemented. The MDGs and their starting timeframe of

1990 puts the onus of achieving the Goals primarily on nation states and, while the MDGs' 2015 year of completion does allow synergies with the Pacific Plan, the latter has a longer term outlook of regional integration. However, it is worth noting that – with some exceptions such as the Plan's proposal for short-term labour migration – the initiative is largely a continuation of the 'business as usual' approach to Pacific development (trade liberalisation and neo-liberal domestic economic policies) that we are critical of in this paper.

Background: The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals have been described as a 'soft law': that is, a type of contract which, while not legally binding, works as a moral imperative obliging its signatories to act on the promises they have made (Asian Development Bank 2004). In the case of the Millennium Development Goals the signatories are countries and the moral imperative is to:

> [Address] extreme poverty in its many dimensions – income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion – while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. (Millennium Project n.d., p1)

In addition to being a moral imperative, the Millennium Development Goals are also a yardstick of sorts against which development progress can be measured. As both a moral imperative and a yardstick, the Millennium Development Goals are intended to be used as a tool that populations can use to hold their leaders to account. Internationally, the Goals are also envisaged as a development compact between the developed and developing worlds. As part of this compact, the developed world is expected to increase overseas

development assistance (ODA), adhere to 'fair' trading practices, and provide medical and other technology to the developing word to facilitate development. The developing world, on the other hand, is expected to reduce corruption and reform governance with the aim of facilitating economic development. Both the developed and developing worlds are also obliged to manage the environment in a sustainable manner (Asian Development Bank 2003, p 5).

There are eight Millennium Development Goals, and distributed amongst these goals are 18 targets and 48 indicators. All of the targets have 1990 as a baseline year and most of the targets are meant to be delivered upon by 2015. The indicators, in turn, may be adjusted for particular countries and regions as appropriate, and are intended for use in monitoring progress towards each of the targets (Asian Development Bank 2003). The eight Millennium Development Goals are shown in Table 1 below and a complete list of the Goals, Targets and Indicators is shown in Appendix 1.

In early 2008 the Millennium Development Goals' targets and indicators were revised and modified. Because this paper was written before this revision and because almost all Pacific data on the Goals predates the change, this paper, except where stated, comments on the pre 2008 target and indicator set.

Table 1 – The Millennium Development Goals
Goal 1 – Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Goal 2 – Achieve universal primary education
Goal 3 – Promote gender equality and empower women
Goal 4 – Reduce child mortality
Goal 5 – Improve maternal health
Goal 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
Goal 7 – Ensure environmental sustainability
Goal 8 – Develop a global partnership for development

Of the eight Goals, the first six are geared around reducing the different components and consequences of poverty, while the seventh pertains to the environment and human interaction with the environment. The eighth Goal is, in essence, a roadmap for achieving the first seven, and its targets and indicators are designed to highlight ways which the developed and developing countries can work together to achieve sustainable human development (Asian Development Bank 2003).

Debate about the Goals

Development is a contentious area so it is unsurprising that since their formulation the Millennium Development Goals have become a source of considerable debate. Broadly speaking this debate can be broken into two categories: debate about the Goals themselves (and their targets and indicators); and debate about the means of meeting the Goals. As Goal 8 is, in essence, a 'road map' for meeting the first seven Goals, these debates can also be viewed as: debates around the first seven Goals and debates around Goal 8.

Debates about Goals 1 - 7

Some of the strongest critiques of the first seven Millennium Development Goals have come from feminist organisations, who have taken issue with the way that gender issues have been incorporated in the Goals. In particular, these organisations' critique of the gender aspects of the Goals has focused on two areas: the initial exclusion from the Goals of any mention of women's sexual and reproductive rights; and the inadequate nature of the indicators associated with Goal 3 (the Goal relating to gender inequalities).

In discussing the exclusion from the Goals of any reference to women's sexual and reproductive rights, Peggy Antrobus of the organisation Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) writes:

> I first heard of the MDGs in the outraged response of the global feminist community when the hard-won goal of women's sexual and reproductive rights was excluded from the list. This is even more inexcusable given that women's sexual and reproductive rights is not only a goal but a crucial target and/or indicator of progress under at least 3 Goals - Goal number 3 (women's equality and empowerment), Goal (number 4 child mortality), Goal number 5 (maternal health) and Goal number 6 (combating HIV/AIDS). (Antrobus 2003, p 1)

For Antrobus, and many other members of gender and development focused organisations, not only was the exclusion of any mention of sexual and reproductive rights vexing because it undermined the other Goals, but also because it represented a step back from previous international agreements on gender such as the Beijing Platform for Action which *had* included references to these rights (Antrobus 2003; Barton n.d.).

Subsequent to the release of the original list of MDGs, concerted campaigning took place with the aim of having women's sexual and reproductive rights measured in the Goals. Campaigning that has ultimately been successful: in 2005 at the UN world summit a commitment was made to recognising the importance of sexual and reproductive rights, and in 2006 Kofi Annan announced that a new MDG target of universal access to reproductive health would be included under MDG 5 (International Planned Parenthood Foundation n.d.). And, after some delay, these commitments have been reflected in the official list of MDG Goals, targets and indicators (United Nations Statistics Division n.d.)

Furthermore, while recognising the significance of the fact that Millennium Development Goal 3 relates specifically to gender, some feminist critics of the Goals have argued that the indicators associated with this Goal provide only a very limited snapshot of the true state of gender relations within societies (Antrobus 2003; Barton n.d.). The indicators associated with Goal three are as follows:

- Indicator 9 – the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education
- Indicator 10 – the ratio of literate females to males in 15-24 year olds
- Indicator 11 – the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Indicator 12 – the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament

To these critics, Indicator 9 says nothing about the quality of education, while Indicator 11 gives equal value to a women working in a sweatshop as to a women CEO of a company. Furthermore, argue the critics, also missing are indicators measuring violence against women, female infanticide, and other characteristics of a society that can tell much about the status of women within it (Barton n.d.)[2].

In addition to feminist critiques of the Goals, another critique that has been made of the first seven Millennium Development Goals – most often by civil society organisations – is that the Goals lack any direct reference to human rights. This

is something which, according to critics, has led to the Goals ignoring some of the most important components of people's quality of life; components such as the freedom of political and other association, free speech, freedom from torture etc. The absence of any direct mention of human rights in the Goals also provides the potential for paradoxical situations such as a repressive dictatorship which halves poverty scoring better on the Goals than a neighbouring democracy which respects its citizen's freedoms and still reduces poverty but not quite to the same extent (Barton n.d.; Gold 2005).

An additional critique of the Goals, often made by organisations working with minority groups, is that the Goals do not pay sufficient attention to the plight of ethnic minorities within countries and, because of this, run the risk of glossing over ongoing injustices taking place in some countries. Along these lines, NGO, Minority Rights Group International (2003) provides evidence of numerous minority groups who have been excluded in one form or another from the development process and who, as a consequence of this, have significantly worse health and other outcomes than their compatriots. Because of this, the Minority Rights Group argues that – as the Millennium Development Goals do not look specifically at the status of minorities – in a significant number of countries, Goals will be met for majority populations while minority groups will still be left shamefully behind (Minority Rights Group International 2003).

A further critique that has been made by some civil society organisations of the Goals is that the Goals are un-ambitious and that it would be a mistake to assume that, if the Goals are met, all the issues of human development have been successfully tackled (Gold 2005). Most often this critique is levelled at

those indicators associated with Goal 1 which make reference to an extreme poverty line of $1 US (adjusted for purchasing power parity). This international poverty line is the same as used by the World Bank in its international poverty studies and (as we will discuss further below) even the World Bank's own staff admit that it is a very low measure of poverty (Ravillion 2003).

At the opposite end of the spectrum from those organisations and authors who claim that the Goals are un-ambitious are critics who argue that the Goals are – instead –too ambitious and that, as such, very unlikely to be met. Along these lines Clemens et al. (2004) argue that, not only are the Goals overly ambitious, but that costing studies such as those undertaken by the UN significantly underestimate the cost of achieving the Goals and that, when these two factors are combined, the chances of the Goals being met in the timeframe set are vanishingly small. The consequence of this, according to Clemens, is that development projects which have actually been quite successful will be declared failures in light of the Millennium Development Goals failing to be met, and that the public perception of ODA will be tarnished, while public enthusiasm for development will be diminished (Clemens et al 2004; see also Economist 2005).

It is worth noting though, in response to both those critics who charge that the MDGs are too ambitious and those who argue that the Goals are not ambitious enough, that Goal indicators can be tailored to be made more appropriate to specific country context.

Debate about Goal 8 (and about Means of Meeting Goals 1 – 7)

Accompanying the debates around the first seven Millennium Development Goals have been debates about the best method of meeting the Goals. These debates have taken place between adherents of what might be described as the 'orthodox' approach to meeting the Goals and those with differing opinions on the most appropriate policy prescriptions for attaining the Goals. The 'orthodox' approach to meeting the first seven Goals is essentially that which is reflected in Goal 8. And it has been further elaborated by the UN Millennium Project (2005) in their report *'Investing in Development: a practical plan to achieving the Millennium Development Goals'*. The orthodox approach to attaining the Goals can be summarised briefly as follows:

Developed countries should offer debt relief to the least developed countries. Developed countries should also increase levels of ODA and target this assistance to least developed countries; particularly with the intent of helping these countries overcome health and geographical problems. Developing countries, in return, should work to reduce corruption and improve governance. Developing countries should also follow sound macroeconomic policies and remove barriers to international trade. Developing countries (with developed country assistance) should work to raise spending on social services (such as education and health) (UN Millennium Project 2005).

This type of approach to development could, quite aptly, be termed 'neo-liberalism with a human face': that is, an approach to development which still adheres to the central tenants of neo-liberalism (free trade, privatisation and macro-economic stability) yet which also attempts to smooth off some of the sharper edges of the neo-liberal economic approach that prevailed in the 1980s and 1990s (no longer, for example, are countries being asked to charge

for primary education).

Unsurprisingly, this approach to achieving the Millennium Development Goals has been met with severe criticism, particularly from those NGOs that witnessed the worst consequences of the decades of neo-liberal development. The Commonwealth Foundation (2005, p 7), for example, notes that:

> [I]t is one of the frustrations of many civil society organisations that the MDGs make no effort to challenge the neo-liberal orthodoxies of trade policies or debt and aid conditionalities, but instead seek to modify some of their deleterious effects.

While Peter Hardstaff of the World Development Movement, commenting on the UN Millennium Project (2005) report, argues that:

> The report simply bypasses the past 20 years of failed IMF/WB structural adjustment as if it never happened. There is simply no mention of the culpability of donors – and the policies they have imposed – for the mess that many countries are in (Hardstaff 2005, p 1).

At the other end of the spectrum from civil society groups, are the current government of the United States and some other conservative critics of the Goals who tend – in rhetoric at least – to support the neo-liberal components of

the orthodoxy but not the 'human face'. Along these lines, John Bolton, the former United States' ambassador to the United Nations, has expressed resistance to parts of the Goals such as the stipulation that developed countries increase ODA (Bolton, 2005). Bolton and his government's aversion to ODA is typically supported by conservative critics of ODA who argue that increased development assistance is undesirable because it hinders rather than fosters development (for examples of this argument see Hughes 2003 and Erikson 2005). It has also been argued by conservative critics of the Goals that proposed debt reduction (included under Goal 8) is misguided because of the 'moral hazard' issues that it raises with respect to countries simply borrowing money again once their initial debt has been forgiven. This is a view, however, that fails to examine the culpability of private banks soliciting developing countries to take up the loans in the first place.

Issues with the Measurement of the Millennium Development Goals

Along with conceptual debates about the merit of particular Goals, there has also been much discussion of potential problems associated with measuring progress (or lack of) towards achieving them. In this area, probably the most comprehensive examination of the hazards involved in compiling the Millennium Development Goals' indicators has been made by Jan Vandemoortele of the UNDP. In undertaking his examination Vandemoortele (2004, p 4) notes that:

> Not all indicators offer equally good gauges of reality. All economic and social indicators are based on two ingredients: observation and construction, but not all use these ingredients

> in the same proportion. The reliability of an indicator tends to decline as more construction is involved because construction is based on assumptions.

Vandemoortele then examines the individual Goal indicators discussing the relative levels of observation and construction that they contain. After doing this, he provides a list of what he considers the five most, and least, reliable indicators. These are shown below in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Reliable and Unreliable Millennium Development Goal Indicators

Most Reliable Indicators	Least Reliable Indicators
Under-five mortality rate.	Proportion of the population earning below $1 per day.
Levels of underweight children.	Proportion of the population below a minimum level of dietary energy consumption.
Net enrolment ratio in primary education.	Primary completion rate.
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary schools.	Maternal mortality ratio.
The proportion of births attended by skilled	The proportion of the population with ac-

(Table Source Vandemoortele 2004, p5)

Of those indicators that Vandemoortele considers the least reliable, one – the Dollar a Day Poverty Measure – deserves particular mention. This is not only because it is used as a Millennium Development Goal *target* (and therefore is more significant than if it were merely an indicator) but also because much has already been written about the methodological issues associated with this

measure. The dollar a day international poverty line has been subjected to significant methodological scrutiny because it has been used by the World Bank for some time as an international poverty measure and, also, because it is the only truly international income poverty measure currently in use. Robert Wade (2003) has summarised the critiques levelled at the World Bank's $1 a day poverty line. The criticisms of the poverty line that he identifies (and which are relevant to the measurement of the Millennium Development Goals are):

- The fact that the $1 a day line is an artificial measure based merely on average poverty lines from several countries, and that it is not based on any particular basic set of needs.
- The fact that income and expenditure data used by the World Bank come from household surveys, and household surveys in the developing world are often prone to large margins of error.
- The fact that the purchasing power parity comparisons used to equalise for the different costs of living in different countries are based on 'general consumption' bundles. These bundles include goods and services unlikely to be used by the poor (such as pedicures) but which are also cheaper in the developing world. The result of this is a poverty line that is probably lower than it would be if only relevant goods and services (to the poor) were used (and hence the number of people recorded as living in poverty by this line is probably lower than it would otherwise be)[3].
- The fact that consumption based poverty lines (like the World Bank's) do not capture well the benefits associated with public provision of goods such as education and health care.
- The fact that the global poverty statistics used in the World Bank's

poverty measures are incomplete. This point is important when one takes into account the fact that international poverty measurement data carry considerable weight in the various ideological debates regarding international development. As Wade notes, patchy data along with significant assumptions mean that there is considerable scope for the World Bank's poverty measures to be 'massaged' to suit the needs of the Bank and its ideological allies (Wade 2003).

Perhaps because of these criticisms the official MDG indicators website notes, in a footnote at the bottom of the page detailing the MDG indicators, that: "For monitoring country poverty trends, indicators based on national poverty lines should be used, where available." (UNSTATS n.d., p 1). Use of local poverty lines ought to address some of the criticisms above; however, thus far, much MDG reporting *does* still make use of the $1 a day figure.

Do Issues with the Goals Render them Meaningless?

Both the conceptual and methodological issues associated with the Millennium Development Goals should be borne in mind when assessing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The most pertinent of the conceptual critiques associated with the Goals serve as a useful reminder not to assume that, just because a particular Goal has been met, that all the associated issues of development have been resolved; while awareness of methodological issues ought to highlight what to look out for when interpreting Goal related statistics. However, it would be mistaken to assume that the issues outlined above render the Goals useless as a development tool and yardstick. Far from it; while there is certainly need for care in assessing Millennium Development Goal statistics and while the Goals would be more useful had they been more holistic, achievement

of those Goals that do exist would still represent a considerable global achievement in terms of international human development. Achievement of the Goals wouldn't by any means be the end of the road as such, but it would certainly be a useful starting point.

International Progress Towards Meeting the Millennium Development Goals

Bearing the aforementioned conceptual and methodological limitations in mind, what can be said about international progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals? In 2005 the UN Millennium Project compiled a comprehensive summary of the World's progress towards Goals, and in their overview report (UN Millennium Project 2005b, p 8) they note that:

> The World has made significant progress in achieving many of the Goals. Between 1990 and 2002 average overall incomes increased by approximately 21 percent. The number of people in extreme poverty declined by an estimated 130 million. Child mortality rates fell from 103 deaths per 1000 live births a year to 88. Life expectancy rose from 63 years to nearly 65 years. An additional 8 percent of the developing world's people received access to water. And an additional 15 percent acquired access to improved sanitation services.

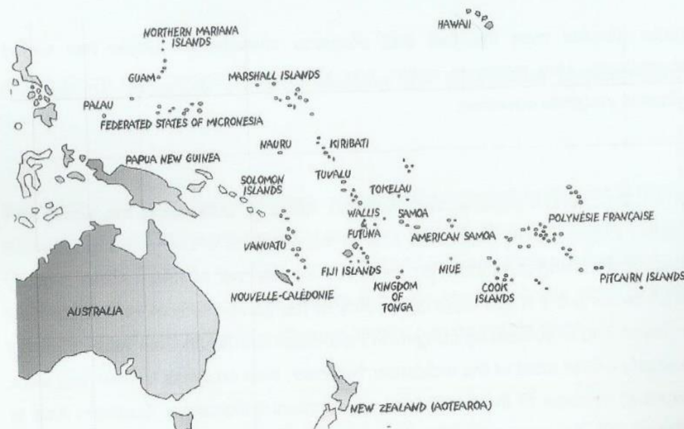
Yet underneath this relatively optimistic summary lies a more complex and less encouraging picture. Firstly, it is worth noting that two of the Millennium Development Goal indicators where encouraging progress appears to have

been made – access to water and the number of people living on less than a dollar a day – are two of the least reliable indicators as discussed above (Vandemoortele 2004). Secondly, in addition to measurement limitations, the optimistic global assessment given in the

quote glosses over the fact that progress towards the Goals has varied dramatically from region to region and also within regions, and much of the 'globe's' progress countries.

Of all the World's regions, Sub-Saharan Africa is performing the worst with respect to the Goals, registering little or no progress in five of the first seven Goals and making insufficient progress in the other two. Northern Africa is doing much better but it is still lagging in some of the gender indicators, in sanitation provision and in combating hunger. In Asia, East and South East Asia are doing relatively well in most of the indicators; however, their progress is slow (and even negative) in some of the health and environmental indicators. Southern Asia is generally making progress in most of the indicators but often insufficiently fast progress for the Goals to be met, while West Asia is making insufficient progress or even going backwards in many indictors. Latin America is doing relatively well on most of the indicators except poverty, where levels of extreme poverty, while already relatively low, are no longer decreasing significantly. Latin America also has a mixed record on the environmental indicators. Meanwhile, the countries of the former Soviet Union are doing relatively well in the gender and environmental indicators but are going backwards in other areas like poverty and health (UN Millennium Project 2005).

So globally, then, it is probably fairest to say that – insomuch as we can rely on the numbers – progress towards to Millennium Development Goals has been mixed. Even less encouraging is the fact that, in many of the areas covered by the Goals, the progress made since the 1990s was actually at a slower rate than it had been in the two proceeding decades (Vandemoortele 2004).



Map Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004

The Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: impediments to understanding where we are

When discussing the progress made towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific the first point that needs to be noted is that, above and beyond the Millennium Development Goal measurement issues already described, there are a variety of factors which make it difficult to accurately assess current progress towards the Goals in the Pacific. These

factors include: the lack of relevance of some of the Millennium Development Goals' targets and indicators to some Pacific Island Countries (PICs); the paucity of data for many of the key indicators in many Pacific Island Countries; the near monopoly that some organisations have on collecting data; and problems associated with aggregation of statistics in an area where there is much diversity both between and within countries. Each of these issues is discussed below.

Limited Relevance of Goal's Targets and Indicators

Several of the Millennium Development Goals' targets and indicators are of limited relevance to many of the Pacific Island Countries, while other Millennium Development Goal measures are relevant to the Pacific Island Countries but do not capture enough relevant information to provide a complete picture of human development in the area.

The first of the Millennium Development Goals' measures that is of limited relevance to the Pacific is the $1 Dollar a day poverty line. The limited relevance of this measure in the Pacific is the result of several factors. For a start, as we have discussed above, the measure is not tied to any particular human need and is a construct created by the World Bank. Furthermore, the $1 a day line is a very low poverty line (Ravallion 2003). As such, the line may well bear little relation to actual deprivation experienced (or not) by the Pacific Islands' inhabitants. Secondly, at present, there is – in most Pacific Island Countries – an absence of the data necessary to correctly calculate Purchasing Power Parity as required in the use of the $1 a day line (Abbott & Pollard 2004; Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2003).

For these reasons a better strategy for measuring poverty trends in the Pacific involves the use of separate needs-based poverty lines in individual Pacific Island Countries. Such an approach has already been used by the Asian Development Bank in its report 'Hardship and Poverty in the Pacific' (Abbott & Pollard 2004). It is worth noting, however, that even this approach to quantifying poverty has its limitations. In particular, in the Pacific setting, where a significant proportion of the population has access to subsistence agriculture and may also be assisted by reciprocity systems (which can serve to act as a 'safety-net' even in the absence of income), any income-only measure of poverty will fail to accurately quantify deprivation. Consumption based poverty lines will do a better job of capturing the non-cash economy, yet even here, many important components of welfare in Pacific societies (such is the reduction of risk associated with traditional safety nets) will not be captured in the data. Indeed, in New Zealand (hardly a subsistence economy), studies by the department of statistics have shown that low income does not explain completely the incidence of deprivation (Perry 2002)[4]. It seems likely to us that, for the aforementioned reasons, the correlation may be even weaker in many parts of the Pacific. Given this fact, an ideal approach to measuring poverty (and progress in eliminating poverty) in the Pacific ought to also involve some form of direct measurement of deprivation experienced; perhaps in a similar manner to New Zealand's Deprivation Index or Economic Living Standards Index[5]. And, as this approach to measuring poverty is currently not being used in the region, all data pertaining to poverty needs to be treated with some scepticism.

The second of the Millennium Development Goals' measures that are of limited relevance to parts of the Pacific are the target and indicators associated with Goal 6. Goal 6 is to "combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases", and

while both Goal 6 and the targets associated with it (targets 7 and 8) make reference to "other diseases" their indicators (indicators 18-24) only refer to HIV, malaria and tuberculosis. Of these indicators tuberculosis and HIV are (or are likely to become) significant issues throughout the Pacific but malaria, on the other hand, is only endemic in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (World Malaria Report 2005). As such, the indicators associated with malaria are only likely to be relevant to these three countries. At the same time, almost all the Pacific Island Countries are seeing increasing incidence of so called 'lifestyle' diseases such as Diabetes and Cardiovascular disease; yet, at present, indicators based on these illnesses are not being used in the region. Because of this omission the indicators, as they currently stand for Goal 6, fall a long way short of capturing the state of health in the Pacific (Asian Development Bank 2003).

The final Millennium Development Goal measures which are of limited relevance to parts of the Pacific are those indicators associated with education. To their credit most Pacific Island Countries already have very high (and universal in several cases) primary education enrolment ratios. Yet, in some Pacific Island Countries the quality of the education provided is poor and, furthermore, there is evidence that, in some Pacific Island Countries, the quality of education provided is declining (Abbott & Pollard 2004). However, the Millennium Development Goals' education indicators make no mention of the quality of education[6]. For this reason, it seems to us that the indicators available are insufficient to truly capture the 'state of education' in the Pacific.

Fortunately – given the limited relevance of the indicators listed above – the Millennium Development Goal process is, as we have noted above, such that the Goals' indicators are not set in stone, and it is intended that countries be allowed to adopt, where appropriate, Millennium Development Goal measures that are of

greater relevance to their own development situation (Asian Development Bank 2003). In the Pacific there is already considerable recognition of this need and encouraging signs that Pacific Island Country governments will do just this (Asian Development Bank 2003; Witham 2004). Despite these encouraging signs, we have still flagged this as an area of concern, however; the reason for this being that, at this stage, while the possibility of reformulation of indicators has been raised, only one Pacific Island country (Papua New Guinea) has attempted to do this (Government of Papua New Guinea 2004). Because, at this stage, only one Pacific Island country has reformulated its Millennium Development Goal indicators, our study is limited to discussion the potential of the Pacific Island Countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals as they were originally conceived, and so all of the above cautions need to born in mind when examining the region's progress towards the Goals.

Paucity of Data

Ascertaining progress towards the Millennium Development Goals is further hampered by lack of data for many of the indicators in many Pacific Island Countries. In the SPC's MDG database no PIC has data for all the MDG indicators and while the majority have some information available for between half and three quarters of the indicators, only (approximately) half of the PICs have data more recent than 1999 for more than 50 percent of the indicators. Similarly, approximately half of the PICs do not have time series data (necessary for determining trends) available for more than 50 percent of indicators (secretariat for the Pacific Community n.d., p1). While some multilateral organisations have started ambitious data collection programmes for certain Goals (such as the ADB's research on poverty), even for these

Goals there remains the problem that in many countries there is no baseline data (data from 1990). This makes it very hard to undertake meaningful assessments of progress, as is intended with the Goals, against the situation in 1990. Moreover, the data which does exist is often of questionable quality (Asian Development Bank 2003; Chung 1995; SPC, 2000; UNESCAP 2005).

Data Gathering Monopolies

An additional, potential, hurdle associated with assessing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals is the fact that the data used for assessing this progress is, in the Pacific, almost entirely collected either by governments or by the same multi-lateral organisations that are involved in funding projects designed to help the Goals be met. Because of the considerable political significance associated with the Millennium Development Goals there is a potential risk that data collected in this manner may be biased towards favourable outcomes for reasons of political expediency (Bretton Woods Project 2004; Wade 2003). It is important to note here, that we do not have any evidence that such skewing of data is taking place in the Pacific; however, given that, in other parts of the world, there is evidence that similar activities have taken place (see, for example, Wade 2003), it seems possible that manipulation of data could become an issue in the Pacific.

Problems associated with Aggregation of Statistics

The final data issue that hampers any assessment of current progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific is the aggregation of data. Aggregation of data is an issue at both international and national levels. The

diversity (cultural, economic, geographical and social) between different Pacific Island Countries is a development truism: in almost every aspect of development something that is true for Papua New Guinea is by no means likely to be true for Tuvalu. Likewise, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals is by no means uniform across the Pacific: some countries are doing much better than others. For example, most Polynesian countries have considerably better human development indicators than do Melanesian countries. For all of these reasons, any reporting on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals which provides statistics on the Pacific as a whole (or, even worse, the 'Asia Pacific Region') needs to be assessed carefully as Pacific-wide statistics may well hide much diversity in achievement. Fortunately, for those keeping track of Millennium Development Goals' indicators, the pitfalls associated with international aggregation of statistics can be kept at bay by making sure that progress towards the Millennium Development Goals is monitored on a country by country basis. However, even within countries there may be substantial differences in outcomes between different areas. The rural urban divide is a well recognised example of intra-country differences; however, there are others that are important too, including: differences between larger 'main' islands and outlying islands; and differences between different ethnicities. All of these intra-country variations mean that those wishing to track progress regarding the Millennium Development Goals need to be wary when assessing aggregated statistics.

The Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: progress to date

For all the above reasons it is very difficult to make anything other than tentative claims regarding progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific. However, the above data limitations not withstanding, it is possible to offer some assessment of the Pacific Island Countries' progress

towards the Millennium Development Goals. And, at the broadest level, the picture in the Pacific is not an encouraging one. As the UN Millennium Project (2005, p21) notes:

> The [Pacific] region is off track for nearly every Goal, and is falling back in some areas...Even where there is progress, it is too slow to achieve the Goals...Only Sub-Saharan Africa is off track on more indicators than Oceania[7].

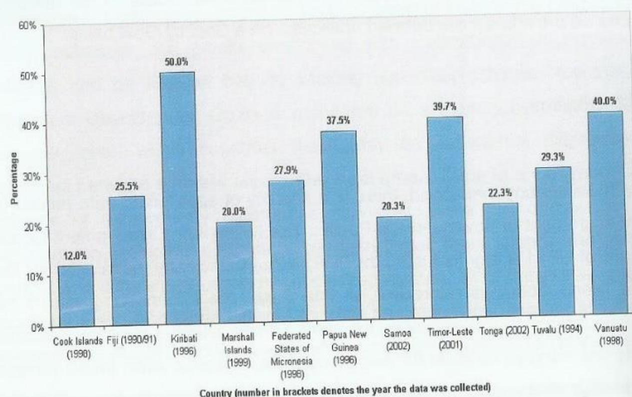
This top level assessment does, however, mask the heterogeneous nature of the Pacific's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. In the following sections we provide a more detailed analysis – on a Goal by Goal basis.

Goal 1 – Poverty

As we have already mentioned, there is a scarcity of appropriate data related to the measurement of poverty in the Pacific. The Millennium Development Goals' measure of US$1 a day (adjusted for PPP) is not particularly meaningful for the Pacific Island Countries. Moreover, at this stage, the information required for PPP calculations is not available for many Pacific Island Countries. National poverty line surveys do exist for some countries; however, even these surveys may be of limited use in calculating the incidence of poverty as they still suffer from the limitations associated with income poverty measurement discussed earlier in this paper. Furthermore, there is very little time series data to enable assessment of trends.

Bearing this in mind, from the data that is available, it appears that poverty is a

significant problem in most of the Pacific Island Countries. With the exception of only the Cook Islands, in all of the countries for which there are data, poverty appears to affect at least 20 percent of the population (Abbott & Pollard 2004, p 29). Of those countries for which data exist, the countries with the highest incidence of poverty are: Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu[8] (Abbott & Pollard 2004, p 29; Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004). For those Pacific Island Countries which have relevant data, the incidence of poverty – based on national needs based poverty lines – is shown below in Figure 1.



(Figure notes: Figure sourced from Abbott & Pollard (2004, p 28); because the graph is based on national poverty lines, some of the inter-country variance in poverty may result from differences in what each country deems as poverty.)

While there is almost no time series data available on the incidence of poverty in the Pacific there is a general belief amongst those studying the phenomenon that poverty is on the increase in the region (Abbott & Pollard

2004; Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004). Some of the reasons given for this belief are:

- Those NGOs and multilateral organisations working in poverty related areas in the Pacific tend to report increased incidence of poverty (see, for example, Abbott & Pollard 2004)
- In many Pacific Island Countries economic growth has not kept up with population growth – in countries where this has been the case it follows that poverty will, most probably, have increased (Abbott & Pollard 2004; Naidu 2002)
- Rising urban unemployment in many Pacific Island Countries. In the absence of social safety-nets (as is the case on much of the Pacific) urban unemployment often equates to poverty, so it follows that rising urban unemployment is probably indicative of rising levels of poverty (Naidu 2002)
- In the ADB's own participatory poverty studies, many of the focus groups used in the studies reported that their situations were deteriorating (Abbott & Pollard 2004).

The Fiji Story

Although Fiji is in many ways quite different from other PICs, the trend in the incidents of poverty is shared with several other countries in the region. Social inequality and poverty are closely entwined. Household Income and Expenditure Surveys in 1977, 1991 and most recently in 2002-3 have shown growing numbers and proportions of Fiji Citizens falling into poverty. Over this period the proportion of households in poverty rose from 11% in 1977 to 25% in 1990/1991

and to nearly 35% in 2003 (Narsey, 2006). Besides military coups and political instability that have slowed down economic growth, there is a fundamental problem in the sharing of wealth across the socio-economic stratas. The top 20 percent of households take a good 40 percent of total incomes and the bottom 20 percent of households obtain 10 percent. According to Narsey (2007a) over the last 30 years, a billion Fijian dollars has been transferred from Fiji workers' wages to employers because of the very low wages paid that have not kept up with cost of living adjustment (COLA). The failure of the state to respond to housing needs of an urbanising population has resulted in a mushrooming of informal housing in squatter settlements in virtually all urban centres. Some 20 percent of those living in these towns and cities are residents of squatter settlements (CCF/ECREA Video, 2007).

The country's position in the United Nations Human Development Index ranking has declined from 45 in 1994 to 90 in 2004.

Goal 2 – Education

As with poverty, availability of data is an issue when assessing Pacific Island Countries' progress towards the Millennium Development Goals associated with education. For many of the countries there is incomplete time series data, making it hard to assess trends (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004). In addition to this, some of the data available has been calculated using proxies. For example, in most Pacific Island Countries literacy figures are calculated based on the proportion of the population who have completed a certain number of years at school (ibid); yet, if the quality of schooling is sub-standard it is not a given that people, even those who have completed several years of schooling, will be functionally literate.

From the data that are available it is possible, though, to draw some conclusions about the state of education in the Pacific Island Countries. Statistics related to education in the Pacific Island Countries are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Education Statistics for Selected Pacific Island Countries

Indicators	Net Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education – percentage		Proportion of Pupils Starting Grade 1 Who Reach Grade 5 – percentage	
Year	1990	2000	1990	2000
Cook Islands		92.3 (2001)	100 (1986)	98.2 (1996)
Fiji	92 (1986)	94.7	91.4 (1996)	88.4 (2002)
Federated States of Micronesia	93.7 (1994)	92.3		66.9
Kiribati	76.2	93.5	98	
Marshall Islands	89.7 (1988)	84.1 (1999)	88 (1988)	86.1 (1999)
Nauru	75.1 (1992)	60.3 (2002)		92 (2002)
Niue		90.2 (2001)		90.5 (2001)
Palau	81.8	76.2		
PNG	66.3	77.4	58.1	56.8
Samoa	82 (1991)	87 (2001)		84 (2001)
Solomon Islands	39 (1986)	56 (1999)	85 (1991)	
Tokelau				
Tonga	91.6 (1986)	89.4 (1996)	84	
Tuvalu	98.2 (1991)	99.6 (2002)	95.8 (1993)	
Vanuatu	74.5 (1989)	78.2 (1999)	90.2 (1991)	91.2

Table Notes: Table source - Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004, p 38. In many Pacific Island Countries data was not gathered in 1990 or 2000, where this has occurred, the nearest year's data has been used and the relevant year is given in brackets.

Several elements of Table 2 are worth noting. Firstly, while there are some exceptions (most notably Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) most of the Pacific Island Countries have done a reasonable job in ensuring that their citizens have access to at least basic education. Some Pacific Island Countries such as Tuvalu, the Cook Islands and Fiji have done particularly well in this respect. In terms of trends, a reasonable number of Pacific Island Countries have improved their educational statistics over the timeframes studied. However, other Pacific Island Countries such as Nauru and the Marshall Islands have experienced deteriorating educational outcomes. Post-1987 coup Fiji has also witnessed a decline in both enrolments and quality of educational services. The large scale emigration of well qualified and experienced teachers has been a significant factor in this lowering of standards.

When considering education in the Pacific it is also important to remember that enrolment statistics say nothing about the quality of education received[9]. And there is evidence suggesting that the quality of schooling in many Pacific Island Countries has been falling (Abbott & Pollard 2004). For this reason, combined with the fact that some Pacific Island Countries show deteriorating education figures, it is premature to be overly sanguine about the state of education in the Pacific Island Countries; challenges still remain.

Goal 3 – Gender

With regards to Millennium Development Goal 3, which addresses gender, to the extent that statistics are available, it is possible to make the following observations (all of which are based on Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004):

- Where time series data are available for gender related indicators, the trend is broadly towards improving outcomes, although there are some indicators, in some countries, where regression is occurring. Even where improvements are occurring, the rate of improvement is not always sufficient for the relevant Millennium Development Goal indicator to be met.
- In terms of education enrolment, many Pacific Island Countries have done an excellent job in achieving gender equality in education. Indeed, in some Pacific Island Countries (such as Samoa), particularly at higher education levels, women outnumber men. There are, however, several Pacific Island Countries which lag behind the rest in terms of gender equality in education. In particular, in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, women are underrepresented at all levels of education.
- With respect to the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, averaged across the Pacific there has been an improvement; however, it has not been dramatic. It is also worth noting that this indicator is not a particularly illuminating one when it comes to issues of gender and the workforce. Indeed, as we have already noted, because non-agricultural employment statistics give equal weight to both a woman working in a sweatshop and a woman working as the CEO of a company, simply measuring the percentage of women in non-agricultural employment tells us very little about gender balance in the labour-force. In Pacific Island Countries, such as Fiji, where more detailed studies have been undertaken on gender issues, the evidence available indicates that employment is still strongly segregated by gender (see Narsey, 2007b).

- Throughout all the Pacific Island Countries women are dramatically under-represented in parliament. Indeed, the ratio of women to men in parliament, in the Pacific is the worst for any region in the World (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004, p 54). In many Pacific countries there is a trend towards improved female representation although, by and large, the degree of improvement is not dramatic. Furthermore, in some Pacific Island Countries, in recent years, there has actually had a decrease in the number of women in parliament.

From these points it is possible to summarise as follows: by and large the Pacific Island Countries have done reasonably well when it comes to gender equality in education. Yet, most Pacific Island Countries remain strongly patriarchal as is seen from employment statistics and also political representation. There is some cause for hope that the gains in education may eventually lead to broader, societal changes; however, it is unlikely that this will occur solely as a result of education, or that it will take place in the immediate future.

Goal 4 – Child Mortality

Overall, the Pacific Island Countries perform well by developing country standards when it comes to infant and child health. However, Papua New Guinea (the most populous Pacific Island Country) is notable for performing considerably worse than the other Pacific Island Countries. For almost all of the Pacific Island Countries the trends in infant and child mortality are towards lower mortality rates. These trends are generally regarded as a continuation of the positive trends in these areas that began in the 1960s (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004).

Along with Papua New Guinea there are, however, three countries that provide cause for concern with respect to child and infant health: in Nauru and Timor Leste infant mortality rates have increased in recent years, while in Fiji infant and child mortality rates have seen little or no improvement over the last 10 years (ibid).

Goal 5 – Maternal health

Some caution is required when assessing maternal health in the Pacific Island Countries in the manner suggested by the Millennium Development Goals' indicators. This is because maternal mortality is typically expressed in deaths per 100,000 births and in small island countries this means that even one death can skew figures significantly. This point notwithstanding, it is still possible to draw some conclusions about maternal health in the Pacific Island Countries. By in large the Pacific Island Countries have low maternal mortality rates and their performance in this respect is better than average for developing countries. What is more, for most of those Pacific Island Countries for which time series of maternal mortality rates are available the trend is broadly positive (i.e. maternal mortality is reducing). However, there are some causes for concern. Papua New Guinea has a very high maternal mortality rate and one which is diminishing only slowly[10]. Likewise, Solomon Islands has a very high maternal mortality rate and while some studies appear to show this decreasing in recent years, others have it rising, particularly during the years in which Solomon Islands was affected by conflict (Solomon Islands Government 2005).

Goal 6 – Disease

Of the diseases referred to specifically in the Millennium Development Goals (malaria, tuberculosis and HIV), malaria is only endemic in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu[11] (World Malaria Report 2005). Tuberculosis and HIV on the other hand are, or are likely to become, health issues in almost all Pacific Island Countries. In terms of data, there are few reliable statistics relating to the incidence of these three diseases in the Pacific at present. While some data are collected, these are – by in large – inaccurate and probably significantly underestimate the prevalence of illnesses. In the case of malaria in Papua New Guinea, for example, the World Health Organisation (cited in Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004, p 87) estimated that, in 2002, the actual incidence of malaria in the country was 16 times larger than the number of reported, confirmed cases of the illness. In the case of HIV it is highly likely that the illness is underreported across the region as a result of social stigma, a lack of public awareness, and poor reporting and testing systems (AIDS New Zealand 2005). In the case of tuberculosis there is little reliable data on the incidence of the illness in the region. There is some data relating to reported cases of the disease; however, this data significantly underestimates the incidence of the illness (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004).

While, hopefully, the collection of statistics relating to these illnesses will improve in coming years, at present, because of the aforementioned data issues, it is very hard to make any statements about trends in the incidence of HIV, tuberculosis or malaria in the Pacific. In the case of HIV it seems quite plausible that the illness will become a problem of increasing significance in

the region. This seems likely not only because of the experience of Papua New Guinea where HIV has increased rapidly and is already a significant problem, but also because high incidences of other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) throughout the Pacific are indicative of unsafe sex practices (AIDS New Zealand 2005).

In the case of tuberculosis, available data suggests that the illness is present in almost all of the Pacific Island Countries and that it is particularly prevalent Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Tuvalu, Niue, and the Federated States of Micronesia; although in some of these cases the small populations of the countries involved mean that reported rates (which are usually given in terms of cases per 100,000 people) can be skewed heavily by one or two cases (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004). Unfortunately, the data available on tuberculosis is insufficient to make any definitive comments relating to trends in the incidence of the disease in the Pacific.

In addition to the infectious illnesses listed above, attention needs to be paid to non-communicable (so-called 'lifestyle') illnesses in the Pacific. Non-communicable illnesses include such diseases as diabetes and cardio-vascular diseases, and while these illnesses are not yet included as official Millennium Development Goal indicators for the Pacific, they are prevalent in many parts of the region, and as such are worthy of mention here. Already most Pacific Island Countries (particularly the more affluent ones) have high incidences of the non-communicable diseases. Nauru, for example, has the World's highest incidence of diabetes mellitus per capita (International Diabetes Foundation 2003, p 1).

Worryingly, it seems likely that the incidence of non-communicable diseases will increase in the Pacific in the near future: the reason for this belief being that the Pacific's rates of non-communicable disease risk factors (such as obesity and smoking) are some of the highest in the World (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004). The likelihood of increased rates of non-communicable diseases is particularly concerning as these illnesses are already imposing a notable burden on many Pacific Island Countries' health systems[12]. And it seems that – unless something dramatic is done to reduce levels of such illnesses – this burden, as well as the human cost of these diseases, will continue to increase (Khaleghian 2003).

Goal 7 – Environment

The targets and indicators of Millennium Development Goal Seven (which pertains to the environment) can be split into two broad categories: those that pertain directly to the environment and those that refer to environmental factors but which also refer to them with respect to human needs[13].

The indicators which refer directly to the environment relate to:

- Forest cover
- Land area protected to maintain biological diversity
- Energy efficiency
- Greenhouse gas and ozone depleting gas emissions

The indicators which refer to the environment with respect to human needs

relate to:

- Safe drinking water
- Sanitation
- Secure land-tenure

The last two of these indicators are intended to be considered with particular emphasis on the lives of urban slum dwellers.

For the all of the environmental indicators, as with almost all the Millennium Development Goal indicators in the Pacific, an assessment of trends is hampered by two things: a paucity of statistics (particularly time series statistics), and considerable variation within and between different Pacific Island Countries. However, it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions.

In the case of forest cover there are worrying trends in most Pacific Island Countries; some Pacific Island Countries (such as the Federated States of Micronesia and Tonga) have very little remaining forested area left and in most Pacific Island Countries deforestation is occurring at a rapid rate. Even in those Pacific Island Countries like Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, which have a significant area of forested land left, evidence suggests that remaining forests are not being managed sustainably and that, unless sustainable development practices are adopted, forested areas will continue to diminish (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004).

In the case of biodiversity, the relevant indicator (indicator 26) refers to the

amount of land set aside to preserve biodiversity. As such, the indicator measures a 'means' rather than an 'end' – the relevant end in this case being the preservation of biodiversity. With respect to the preservation of biodiversity (the ends) the statistics for the Pacific as a whole are sobering; according to the Asian Development Bank (2004b, p 32) the region has the World's highest number of rare, threatened and endangered species per capita. Moreover, some estimates place as much as 50 percent of the region's biodiversity at risk of extinction (ibid). With respect to what is actually measured in the indicator (the amount of land under protection or the 'means') it is difficult to accurately asses the Pacific Island Countries' progress. There are two reasons for this: firstly the relevant indicator refers to the "proportion of *land* area" protected to maintain biological diversity; yet many of the Pacific Island Countries, while not actively preserving land area, have large marine reserves (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004). And secondly, while some Pacific Island Countries, most notably Kiribati, have large reserves on paper these reserves are not actively protected from incursion (ibid). This picture is further complicated by the fact that in some parts of the Pacific, even where there is no official protection of biodiversity, traditional practices may provide a proxy protection of sorts. As a consequence of these aforementioned factors, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2004, p 103) concludes that: "[available] data are not complete, and do not allow assessment of whether protection measures are actually in place or whether or not they are effective".

In the case of energy efficiency (indicator 27) there is insufficient data at present to report on the state of energy efficiency across the region (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004).

Likewise, with Greenhouse Gas emissions (indicator 28), incomplete data on emissions makes it hard to assess emission levels or trends in the region. That

data which is available suggests that most Pacific Island Countries are relatively minor emitters of Greenhouse Gases, even on a per capita basis, when compared to global averages (ibid). However, it is plausible that this may change if the region experiences significant economic growth in the future. With emissions of ozone depleting chlorofluorocarbons, available data suggests that the Pacific Island Countries are doing reasonably well with low and decreasing levels of emissions in many countries (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004).

With respect to sanitation and clean drinking water sources, going by the statistics available[14], many of the Pacific Island Countries have done reasonably well although some, such as Kiribati, lag a long way behind. The progress by the Pacific Island Countries in these areas also varies significantly depending on what definitions of 'improved' or 'adequate' water supply and sanitation are used; when more rigorous definitions are used, the percentage of the population covered drops dramatically (ibid). The picture is further complicated by the fact that, in many of the smaller low-lying atoll Pacific Island Countries, water sources, while being adequate during wetter years, tend to be inadequate in drier drought years, meaning that atoll inhabitants often experience some 'insecurity' when it comes to water supply. In extreme drought years this insecurity can even impact larger, non-atoll states like Fiji and Papua New Guinea (ibid). For both water supply and sanitation, as far as trends go, while official statistics largely show positive trends in these areas, with the rapid, unplanned, urbanisation that is taking place in many Pacific Island Countries, and the drain on municipal resources that is associated with the urbanisation, it seems possible that for a growing proportion of people in Pacific Island Countries the situation may well deteriorate in the near future.

An example of this phenomenon is Fiji where, over the last decade, water cuts

became a common phenomenon as the established infrastructure was not very well maintained resulting in a significant amount of loss as a result of leakages and the large increase in demand with rapid urbanisation. Subsequently, in a number of towns such as Nadi, Rakiraki and Savusavu, there have been periodic outbreaks of water borne diseases resulting from poor quality public water supply.

For the final indicator under Goal 7, the indicator relating to secure land tenure, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, which is the organisation that has collected the most comprehensive range of data on the Millennium Development Goals to date, concludes that there is inadequate data to asses this indicator in the Pacific at present (ibid). It seems likely, however, that, given the rapidly increasing urbanisation in almost all of the larger Pacific Island Countries, and given the fact that much of this urbanisation is taking place in squatter settlements, that there is a rising problem related to insecure land tenure in the Pacific (Naidu 2002).

A very significant threat to Pacific islands environments including the availability of drinking water and land, is rising sea level as a result of global warming. Already atoll countries such as Kiribati and Tuvalu are beginning to experience the negative consequences of sea level rise. It is likely that the number of environmental refugees in Pacific Island Countries will rise within this decade.

Obstacles to Meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific

Clearly then, even though appropriate statistics are patchy, when it comes to meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific there is no cause for complacency; instead, in many of the Pacific Island Countries there is substantial cause for concern as, in a variety of different areas, the suggested indicators show trends towards worsening outcomes rather than improvement. The picture becomes particularly worrying when one expands the goals of human development beyond the bare minimums expressed in many of the Millennium Development Goals' indicators.

Yet, while there is cause for concern, the outlook for the Pacific Island Countries is far from hopeless – sustained and substantial human development is clearly possible in the Pacific as is shown by the dramatic improvements in maternal health, child and infant health, and education, which took place in the region, primarily in the 1960s and 1970s. However, there are substantial obstacles that confront the Pacific Island Countries in their quest for human development. Broadly speaking these obstacles can be grouped into the following categories: problems of geography; institutional problems; issues associated with globalisation; problems associated with neo-liberalism and structural adjustment; conflict; geo-political problems; and the rise of HIV.

We refrain from commenting on the issue of climate change, as this is a truly global issue and this paper aims to focus on challenges more specific to the Pacific. It goes without saying, however, that unchecked climate change will almost certainly have serious negative impacts on human development in the Pacific.

Problems of Geography

There is a strong contemporary school of thought in development economics that asserts that geography has a significant, direct, influence on the economic development of nations (see for example Sachs 2003; and Sachs 2005). According to this school of thought, geography can hinder economic development in a variety of ways including: unfavourable geography being an impediment to trade and trade routes; disease burden; lack of resources; and, almost paradoxically, an overabundance in resources, which can distort economies, and lead to rent seeking behaviour from elites (Sachs 2003; for a discussion of the problems associated with an over-abundance of resources see Stiglitz 2004). Such thinking is by no means universally accepted and there have been numerous critiques of the geography school of development economic thought (see for example Acemoglu 2003); however, these critiques not withstanding, in the Pacific context it is clear from both the history of development, and the current state of development, that geography does play an active role in influencing patterns of development.

With respect to geography, the Pacific Island Countries are both diverse and dispersed. The diversity of the Pacific Island Countries means that the influence of geography on development varies significantly from country to country. In some of the Pacific Island Countries, such as Tuvalu and Tokelau, which have very little land and few resources, the geographical constraints to development are obvious. The constraints become less acute in the larger Pacific Island Countries (such as Fiji) yet they still exist, and in outlying atolls they can be just as significant as in the smallest countries. Even Papua New Guinea – the Pacific's largest country – has its own unique geographical

constraints including the inaccessibility of its rugged interior regions which hinders trade and limits political control, and the effect of malaria on its population.

In addition to this, abundance of natural resources may leave Papua New Guinea – along with oil rich Timor-Leste – prone to what economists refer to as the 'Curse of Resource Abundance'. According this economic theory, primary-resource rich countries often fail to develop because abundance of natural resources cause economies to become distorted and can also lead political elites to tend towards corruption and mismanagement (Stiglitz 2004)[15]. In addition to this explanation of the 'Curse of Resource Abundance', it is also relevant to note that resource rich countries tend to be prone to occupation by other countries, which then manage their economies in extractive manners. This much is painfully obvious in the history of Timor-Leste, and could be contended to have affected Papua New Guinea's development as well[16].

The dispersed nature of the Pacific Island Countries offers its own impediment to development. This is that trade within and between many Pacific Island Countries requires the transport of goods over often expansive areas of ocean. Even where there is adequate infrastructure available for this in the Pacific, the costs associated with the transport often restrict the opportunities for commerce (MFAT 2006; Malua 2002; Scollay 2001).

There is one final impediment to human development in the Pacific associated with the unique geography of the area. This is simply that, because the geography of the Pacific Island Countries offers such unique and dramatic

challenges to development, stock-standard approaches to development will often prove woefully inadequate when it comes to generating the desired development results in the Pacific. While this may appear to be stating the obvious, there is still a strong tendency amongst some development agencies to simply apply the latest development paradigm to the unique problems of the Pacific, with predictable results. This is something that we will return to later in the paper.

Problems of Institutions and Governance

Internationally, in recent years, there has been much written in development circles about the importance of institutions and governance in the development process (see for example Acemoglu 2003; and Rodrik 2003). Likewise, in the Pacific, increasing attention is being paid to these areas. The increased focus on governance and institutions in the Pacific is not only a reflection of international trends, but has also come about because of the numerous scandals that have rocked the region in recent years. These scandals include the F$220 million National Bank of Fiji fiasco; the sale of passports by officials in Tonga, Samoa and Kiribati; multimillion dollar open government guarantees to con artists by political leaders in the Cook Islands and Vanuatu; the loss of millions of dollars by Nauru through mismanagement which extended to funding a play in London by one of its dubious foreign advisers; and, most recently, the disappearance of US$20 million entrusted to the king of Tonga's official American court jester cum investment adviser (Naidu 2002, p 3).

With respect to corruption alone, the Asian Development Bank estimates that one third of all public investment is squandered on corruption in the Asia and Pacific region (Asian Development Bank 2004, p 8). The impacts of poor

governance are not just limited to corruption either; indeed, poor governance and weak institutions have lead to a multitude of problems in the region, above and beyond financial scandals. These problems include: limited democracies in some Pacific Island Countries (such as Tonga) and unstable democracies in others (such as Fiji and Solomon Islands); inefficient provision of public services and infrastructure; and also human rights abuses and police brutality (as has been seen in Fiji and Papua New Guinea recently) (Naidu 2002; Human Rights Watch 2005; Gibbs, 2007).

Once all of these factors are added together it is clear that poor governance is a major obstacle to reaching the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific. And it is an encouraging sign that this much is recognised by almost all the players in the development industry in the Pacific. However, it is important to note that there is also often much that is missing in the way that some development agencies discuss governance with regards to the Pacific.

The first important point that is often glossed over in discussions regarding governance and institutions in the Pacific is that the problems experienced in the region are not solely of the region's own making. Many of the issues of governance and institutions in the Pacific are, in part at least, a legacy of the ways in which the colonial powers ruled or misruled the Pacific; yet it is surprising how often commentators on issues of governance and institutions ignore this fact. Moreover, many critics of the governance of Pacific Island Countries also often avoid mentioning the fact that – even in the current day and age – forces leading to poor governance and institutional weakness in the developing world that flow from developed world business interests (Birdsall et al. 2005; for an alleged example of this in the Pacific see Kahn 2000). While it is certainly

appropriate for there to be emphasis on improved governance and better institutions in the Pacific it is important to recognise the developed world is not blameless when it comes to the current state of affairs.

It is also worth noting that while improved institutions and governance are important for development in the Pacific, they are not the only important factors. Sachs (2005), for example, gives examples of developing nations where relatively good governance has taken place yet were development has also been hindered either by: geographical constraints; the policies of multi-lateral organisations; or by imbalances in the global economic system. This is important to bear in mind particularly when much commentary on development at present tends to associate all the problems of underdevelopment with issues of governance and faulty institutions (for distinctly different examples of articles doing this see Acemoglu 2003; Boynton 2002; and Hughes 2003).

The final significant point about governance and institutions that needs to be made with respect to attaining the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific is that 'improved governance' and 'better institutions' can mean a variety of different things to different people, and that some interpretations are much more conducive to human development than others. Too often 'good governance' and 'improved institutions' is simply seen as reduced corruption and efficient economic management. Yet such an approach misses the fact that, for genuine human development to take place, the improvement of governance and institutions needs to come about as part of the deepening and reinforcing of the democratic process. Without this there is no guarantee that the benefits of economic growth will ever be distributed equitably throughout a society (Bendana 2004). Furthermore, experiences in other parts of the

developed and developing worlds show that a strong civil society coupled with a transparent democratic process is an effective way of ensuring good governance in the long term (Putnam et al. 1994; Wood, 2004).

The Perils of Globalisation

The term 'globalisation' is itself a problematic one, which can have different meanings depending on who is using it and also the context within which it is being used. For this paper we have chosen to define globalisation as: increasing interconnectedness between the countries of the globe. Such interconnectedness can (and is) taking place in a variety of spheres including: the environmental sphere, the economic sphere, the cultural sphere, the political sphere, and the realm of ideas. Manifestations of this increased interconnectedness include: global environmental issues, international trade, international flows of people and international mobilisations of civil society.

Clearly, the impact of globalisation on the Pacific is worthy of separate analysis of its own (see, for example, Firth, 2005) and in this paper we have limited ourselves to simply commenting on those components of globalisation that, in our minds, have the most relevance to the Pacific's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. In doing so we are specifically avoiding making any blanket judgements on whether globalisation is a positive or a negative force. Indeed, perhaps the most constructive approach to assessing globalisation with respect to human development in the Pacific, is that it is simply something that is taking place, and that it may have either a positive or a negative impact depending on the choices made by governments and multi-lateral organisations.

As this section of the paper is headed the 'Perils of Globalisation' we will comment here only on the one element of globalisation that we feel has the greatest potential to hinder the progress of the Pacific Island Countries towards the Millennium Development Goals: that is, the changing nature of the Pacific Islands' economic linkages with each other, and with the rest of the World. There are other issues which confront the Pacific Island Countries (such as the spread of HIV) that are clearly linked to globalisation; however, for clarity's sake, because these issues also have other components (such as health care), we will deal with them in separate sections. We will also – in latter sections of the paper – discuss other elements of globalisation (such as ODA and civil society inter-connectedness) which may have the potential to help the Pacific Island Countries meet the Millennium Development Goals.

When it comes to international economic linkages (or economic globalisation as it is often referred to) there is a broad consensus – spanning from Jeffrey Sachs to Helen Hughes and including most multi-lateral organisations – that the best approach to economic globalisation is the 'free trade approach'. Under this approach governments are advised to remove (or at least minimise) any barriers to international trade. Such barriers include: subsidies paid to domestic producers, import tariffs and even preferential access agreements for some international producers. The free trade approach to economic globalisation has some basis in economic theory which argues that unimpeded international markets can maximise economic production and efficiency by allowing countries to specialise in particular industries and to take advantage of any comparative (or competitive) advantage that they may possess[17].

Yet, while a theoretical case for across the board trade liberalisation exists, the historical evidence for liberalisation automatically leading to increased economic performance is weak (Rodrik 2001). Indeed, almost without exception, those countries which have high human development indicators (including the OECD and countries such as South Korea), developed while protecting key industries, and it was only after they had reached high levels of development that they cut trade restrictions (Chang 2002; Wade 2004). Moreover, in many parts of the developing world, policies adopted under the rubric of liberalisation have, in the short term at least, led to increases in poverty rather than reductions (Hardstaff 2005).

In the Pacific region, the free trade approach to globalisation has started to shape economic policy via a variety of mechanisms. The first of these is membership (or entry into the membership process) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). As of 2004, four Pacific Island Countries were members of the WTO and a further three were in the process of joining (or attempting to join) the organisation (Narsey 2004). Membership (or desired membership) of the WTO, while not inevitably requiring complete removal of trade barriers has, in some instances, compelled Pacific Island Countries to reduce tariffs and other impediments to imports (Coates & Lennon 2005; for the Fijian example see World Trade Organisation 1997; for the ongoing example of Vanuatu see Gay & [illegible] n.d. as well as Lennon 2005).

The second mechanism through which the free trade approach to globalisation has manifested itself in the Pacific is through pressure on local governments from international donor organisations. As part of a broader neo-liberal economic programme (discussed further below) international donor agencies in the Pacific,

such as the World Bank and ADB, have pressed countries receiving ODA from them to open up to international trade (ACFOA 2002; Coates & Lennon 2005; Gay & Joy n.d.; Lennon 2005; Storey & Murray 2001).

The third mechanism through which the free trade approach to globalisation has taken hold in the Pacific is through regional trade agreements and, in particular the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Cooperation (PACER) as well as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) currently being negotiated by the European Union. The PICTA agreement relates to trade between the Pacific Island Countries, while the PACER agreement pertains to trade between the Pacific Island Countries, and Australia and New Zealand (Narsey 2004). Both agreements have trade liberalisation at their centre. European Union EPAs are being negotiated with the expiry of the Lomé and Cotonou trade agreements. More detail is given on the costs associated with the end of Lomé and Cotonou below but, for now it is worth emphasising the pressure being brought to bear by the EU on PIC countries to adopt agreements which have strong elements trade liberalisation at their core. With the intense pressure of the European Union on Pacific ACP countries (signatories to the Lome and Cotonou agreements) to negotiate and accede to EPAs on a regional basis, Pacific ACP countries' efforts at regional solidarity have collapsed. Fiji and Papua New Guinea have signed an interim agreement to meet EU deadline, thereby weakening the position of the Pacific ACP group. It is likely that as the EU's EPA imposition is finalised, this will trigger Australia and New Zealand's push for PACER to be brought forward.

While there is nothing inherently anti-development about increased

international trade or trade agreements (indeed trade plays a crucial role in development) there several reasons why an overly-rigid adherence to a free-trade ideology in the Pacific may be act as an impediment to attaining the Millennium Development Goals in the region. The first of these reasons relates to the loss of government revenues associated with the reduction or removal of trade tariffs. At present, almost all of the Pacific Island Countries obtain a significant proportion of their government revenue from the collection of tariffs and import duties, and in some Pacific Island Countries tariff revenues comprise more than 60 percent of total government revenue (Coates & Lennon 2005; Scollay 2001)[18]. However, in recent years, as part of the free trade agenda for the Pacific, many Pacific Island Countries have been compelled to reduce tariffs and, through all of the mechanisms described above, it appears likely that they will be required to do so further in the future (Coates & Lennon 2005; Kelsey 2004; Narsey 2004). As, almost without exception, Pacific Island governments are not running large budget surpluses at present, the reduction of tariffs as a source of government revenue for Pacific Island Countries will have one of two consequences: reduced government services or taxes having to be raised from alternate sources. In the case of reduced government services there is a clear risk that these reductions will take place either in health or education, in which case they may well lead to deterioration in Millennium Development Goal indicators. In the case of tax increases – particularly if the increases take the form of a value added tax (VAT) (as was imposed in Vanuatu and as is being discussed in the Marshall Islands) – the brunt of these increases may well fall on the islands' poor[19] (Coates & Lennon 2005; Firth 2005; Gay & Joy n.d.).

The second major cause for concern associated with the free trade agenda for the Pacific is the consequences of the agenda on those workers in the Pacific Island Countries who are currently employed in economic activities that may, in

the event of trade liberalisation, be adversely affected (Narsey 2004). Adherents to conventional economic theory argue that this concern is mistaken as economic theory predicts that, after tariffs and other protections are removed, even if some sectors are destroyed, the economy will simply restructure itself in a more efficient manner and those workers who were made unemployed will be reemployed in new sectors that emerge. Yet it is highly debatable that such economic theory is applicable in the Pacific Island case where the scope for new industries to form is limited by the geographical and cultural constraints of the region (Coates & Lennon 2005; Firth 2005)[20]. As such, the negative impacts of trade liberalisation related job losses may be long lived.

In addition to the concerns associated with the adoption of trade liberalisation by the Pacific Island Countries, there is a further issue associated with the changing nature of economic globalisation that may well impact on the Pacific Island Countries' ability to meet the Millennium Development Goals. This is phasing out of certain trade treaties that gave some Pacific Island Countries preferential access to European, Australasian and American markets. The most significant of the agreements being phased out is the Cotonou agreement. The Cotonou agreement was established in 2000 and superseded the pre-existing Lomé agreement (signed in the 1970s). Both the Lomé and Cotonou agreements provided Pacific Island Countries (and some other nations) with preferential access to European markets for some agricultural commodities, as well as special pricing for sugar (Firth 2005; Oxfam 2005).

In Fiji (the most significantly affected Pacific Island Country) the Lomé and Cotonou agreements enabled the sugar industry to provide livelihoods for thousands of mainly Indo-Fijian farmers on the islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu (Firth 2005). However, the Cotonou agreement has recently been

deemed WTO incompatible and the European Union has significantly reducing preferential access in the EPAs that it is negotiating in Cotonou's wake (Firth 2005). Firth (2005, p 5) explains the significance of this:

> Whatever the final outcome for sugar, it is certain to be less favourable than existing arrangements and to lead to a drastic decline of the Fiji sugar industry, which is estimated to provide employment for more than 40,000 people in a country of only 820,000...And while the mantra of the globalizers is that Fiji should restructure its economy accordingly, the prospects for successful restructuring are far from obvious.[21]

Along with the Lomé agreement, Fiji is also being affected by the end of another WTO-incompatible trade regime – the Multi Fibre Arrangement, which expired in 2005. The expiry of the Multi Fibre Agreement impacted on those Fijian garment producers who exported to the USA and according to Firth (2005, p 5) "delivered a blow to an industry that earns more for Fiji than sugar and employs about 14,000 people, many of them women whose cash income is a major part of family earnings." From its in early 2000 peak of exporting more than $F300 million and employing between 18,000 to 20,000, Fiji's garment industry is near collapse with the number of people employed reduced by two-thirds to three quarters (Storey, 2006).

For all of the reasons above, we would argue that both the changing nature of economic globalisation in the Pacific and, in particular, the 'free trade at all

costs' approach to economic globalisation currently prevalent, have the potential to be significant hurdles to attaining the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific.

Neo-liberalism

In recent years the free trade approach to globalisation has been associated with a broader school of economic thought called neo-liberalism. In addition to preaching free trade, advocates of neo-liberalism also call for a broad programme of reduced government intervention in the economy. As such, as well as free trade, neo-liberals typically advocate the privatisation of state run businesses, the removal of government food subsidies, reduction of government bureaucracies, reduced taxation, and – in some cases – user pays primary health and education systems.

As with free trade, the neo-liberal approach to development remains the orthodoxy in most multi-lateral organisations and the majority of Pacific Island Countries have experimented with some form of neo-liberal policies in recent years (Murray 2001; Story & Murray 2001; Slatter, 2006). The experiences of these countries are instructive. Fiji, for example, has engaged in a programme of neo-liberal economic policies since the early 1990s (Murray 2001; Story & Murray 2001). At the same time income poverty has risen in Fiji (Abbott 2004) and at least some of this increase appears to be attributable to the reforms (Naidu 2002). In addition to this, Fiji's reforms have led to raised costs for basic services such as water and the introduction of a VAT, which led to a rise in the cost of foodstuffs (ACFOA 2002; Barr 2004)[22].

At the same time as Fiji was engaging in its reform process, Vanuatu also implemented neo-liberal economic policies, in this case at the behest of the ADB. Lennon (2005, p8) describes the results of these policies as follows:

> The CRP [the Comprehensive Reform Programme – the name for the neo-liberal policies] has now been in operation for eight years. There is general consensus in Vanuatu that the CRP has largely failed in its objectives. Warning signs were apparent shortly after the CRP was implemented: GDP immediately began to shrink, exports plummeted and foreign investment declined…Government revenue declined sharply (and has only just recovered), in part due to the loss of tariff revenue, which was not fully replaced by VAT. Another major source of revenue loss has been the sell-off of profitable assets…Reforms under the CRP have failed to provide tangible economic benefits for Vanuatu's population. In urban areas, unemployment rates, which were very low, have risen significantly.

Unfortunately, neither the ADB nor the government of Vanuatu made any significant attempt to record trends in the incidence of poverty over the period of its reforms, yet it seems highly likely, given the facts above, that poverty increased in Vanuatu during this period of time.

Meanwhile in the Cook Islands, as part of broader neo-liberal economic reforms (which entailed downsizing the public service by two thirds), the education budget was almost halved in the mid 1990s while the budget for housing and community services was reduced from $9 million to $1 million over the same period of time (ACFOA 2002, p 11). And in Tonga reforms led increased prices

for services such as electricity (ACFOA 2002).

These Pacific Island experiences, combined with considerable evidence accumulating from other parts of the World (Barton n.d.; Focus on the Global South 2003; Hardstaff 2005; Rodrik 2004; Stiglitz 2002), which shows neo-liberal policies either generating increased rates of poverty or failing to reduce poverty in any meaningful sense, lead us to believe that neo-liberal economic policies have the potential to become a significant obstacle to attaining the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific.

In saying this it is important to note that we are not denying that there is a role to be played by private enterprise and markets in fostering economic development which, in turn, can lead to improved human development. The point that we are making, however, is that there needs to be a balance between the private sphere and the public sphere. Not only is the public sphere is required to provide social services which the market neglects (Sachs 2005; UNESCAP 2005; Vandemoortele 2002), but in many Pacific Island Countries the state sector also serves a valuable role as an employer, generating positive flow-on effects in terms of human development. The state can also play an important role in fostering economic development as is evidenced by the economic histories of Europe and the Asian Tiger economies (Chang 2002; Wade 2004). Unfortunately, neo-liberal economic theory appears to be blind to these points and, as such, adherence to it promises to remain a barrier to human development in the Pacific.

The Rise of HIV

Target 7 (under Goal 6) of the Millennium Development Goals calls for the halting and reversing of the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. And, because of the potential HIV has for derailing many of the other Goals, in many ways this target is one of the most important of all the Millennium Development Goal targets[23].

Globally the statistics on HIV are sobering with the epidemic affecting as many as 44 million people worldwide and as many as 28 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa alone (UNAIDS 2004, p 1; UNAIDS 2004b, p 1). What is more, incidence of HIV infection is still rising rapidly in many parts of the World. Fortunately – with the notable exception of Papua New Guinea – most of the Pacific has thus far been spared the worst of the HIV epidemic; however, it seems highly likely that, unless major action is taken, that HIV incidence will increase dramatically across the Pacific in the near future (AIDS New Zealand 2005; UNAIDS 2004c). There are a variety of reasons for this prediction including:

1. The fact that current statistics measuring HIV incidence in the Pacific almost certainly underestimate the prevalence of the disease. This is because many Pacific Island Countries do not currently have adequate HIV testing programmes and also because of the fact that the stigma associated with HIV discourages people from being tested for the illness (AIDS New Zealand 2005).
2. The high rate of teenage pregnancies and incidence of STIs that is

recorded in most Pacific Island Countries. This fact is significant not only because pregnancies and STI incidence is indicative of unsafe sex practices, but also because existing STIs are thought to facilitate the transmission of HIV (AIDS New Zealand 2005; UNAIDS 2004c).

- The incidence of religious beliefs and other cultural practices in many Pacific Island Countries that make the discussion of sexual matters taboo. Such taboos impede safe sex and other illness awareness programmes that will be required to stop HIV from spreading (AIDS New Zealand 2005).

- Patriarchal systems and increased population mobility including labour mobility (for example, seafarers in Kiribati and Tuvalu and security personnel in Fiji) as well as tourism.

The case of Papua New Guinea provides a sobering example for the rest of the Pacific of just how rapidly HIV rates can rise if no action is taken. As recently as 1987 there were only six reported cases of HIV infection in Papua New Guinea, yet by the end of 2003 an estimated 0.6 percent and possibly as many as one percent of Papua New Guinea's population were thought to be HIV positive[24] (Centre for International Economics 2002, p 81; UNAIDS 2004c, p 1). And in Lae (Papua New Guinea's second largest town), in 2004, 2.5 percent of all pregnant women (who are routinely tested for the disease) were found to be HIV positive (UNAIDS 2004c, p 1).

The rapid rise of HIV in Papua New Guinea combined with the aforementioned reasons for believing that the disease could spread relatively rapidly through the Pacific provide reason for serious concern. In the case of the Millennium

Development Goals, it seems highly likely that, unless a concerted effort is made to stop the rise of HIV in the Pacific, the disease may well not only impede the Pacific Island Countries' progress on Millennium Development Goal 6, but on many of the other Goals as well[25]. The good news is that some action *is* now being taken to attempt to arrest the spread of HIV. It remains to be seen whether it will be sufficient or successful.

Conflict

While the Pacific is invariably promoted in tourist brochures as a tranquil, peaceful paradise, in reality, conflict is (or has been) a serious issue in several Pacific countries and is (or has been) a more minor issue in several others. The three Pacific Island Countries most seriously affected by conflict in recent years have been Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands[26]. And while a detailed analysis of these conflicts is beyond the scope of this paper, several salient points are worth noting about the violence that has taken place.

Firstly, in all three cases, the roots of the conflicts can be traced back to colonialism. In the case of Bougainville, the island was only ever included a part of Papua New Guinea thanks to colonial map drawing (O'Callaghan 2002). Moreover, it was the Australian colonial government that made the initial decision to mine the island (ibid). In the case of Fiji the ethnic, political and economic tensions that led to the coups have obvious linkages to the British colonials' decision to import labour from India to Fiji as well as linkages to the institutions the British set up, and the way that these institutions engendered racial division. While, in the case of Solomon Islands, ethnic tensions there also, in part, had their roots in the way that colonial powers apportioned political and economic

power, and in the institutions that they bequeathed the country (Bennett 2002).

Secondly, in Papua New Guinea (and to a lesser extent Fiji) the actions of Western economic interests (post colonialism) have played a significant role in leading to conflict occurring. In the Bougainville case, it was the high environmental costs of the Panguna mine (run by Bougainville Copper Limited, of which the Australian subsidiary of Conzinc Rio Tinto owned a majority share) combined with the minimal economic benefits from the mine accruing to the local population that paved the way for secessionist violence (O'Callaghan 2002).

Thirdly, in all three cases, the consequences of conflict were not limited to the immediate violence and its victims. In the Solomon Islands violence led to a near complete collapse of government as well as substantial economic woe (Amnesty International 2004). Likewise, in Papua New Guinea ongoing conflict in Bougainville led to the resignation of several politicians, while the economic impact of diminished tax revenues from the Panguna mine had significant nationwide economic impacts (O'Callaghan 2002; Naidu 2005). In Fiji, the successive coups are almost universally considered to be a factor contributing to the economic stagnation that has plagued the country over the last decade and a half (Naidu 2005; Chand and Naidu, 1997; Prasad, 1998; Reddy and Naidu, 2001; Narayan and Prasad, 2006).

Finally, in none of the three countries affected has conflict resolution been an easy process. In Fiji, a period of relative stability did not lead to lasting peace; instead it sowed the seeds of another coup and period of military rule, followed

by a period of electoral politics and yet another coup and military backed government . Meanwhile, Solomon Islands was only able to achieve an end to conflict with the intervention of a significant international force and – sadly – some recent events suggest that the process of peace-building in Bougainville, while initially very successful, may be backsliding (Henderson 1999; Hegarty [illegible]; Regan 2002; Watson and Henderson, 2005).

While violence alone is enough to make any conflict a tragedy, in the case of the major conflict zones in the Pacific, the significant social and economic consequences of the conflicts along with the fact that conflicts, once started, are rarely easily resolved, is reason – in our minds at least – to include conflict as a potential hurdle to meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific. Clearly, in the case of the countries we have discussed, the social and economic [illegible] of conflict has affected their ability to meet the Goals. And while not all Pacific Island Countries are affected by conflict, few should be considered completely immune to the risk of it arising.

It is, therefore, maintained that the issue of conflict in the Pacific needs to be taken seriously if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met.

Inadequate and poorly given ODA

In recent years considerable attention has been paid to authors such as Helen Hughes ([illegible]) who have argued that ODA either does little good or actively harms developing nations including those in the Pacific. Yet such claims are at

odds with the bulk of recent empirical research that suggests that ODA has a positive impact on economic development (Clemens et. al. 2004b; Greenhill and Watt 2005; McGillivray et. al. 2005).

A more nuanced look at ODA and its role in Pacific development (including meeting the MDGs) suggests that, far from being curtailed, ODA needs to be increased to the region[27]. If the MDGs are to be met, key public services such as education and health need to be adequately funded (Vandemoortele 2002). Similarly, action needs to be taken to arrest the spread of HIV and non-communicable diseases and HIV, as well as in conflict resolution. All of which needs to be paid for. And, at present, the budgets of most PICs are simply not up to funding these urgent tasks. Moreover, given the reliance of many governments in the region on trade tariff income and the trend towards lowering tariffs, it is entirely plausible that the budget position of many PICs may not improve in the short term. While considerable amounts of ODA already flow into the region there are still shortfalls in all the spending areas identified above. As such, unless ODA increases, its inadequate levels will remain a hurdle to achieving the MDGs.

Quantity is not the only issue associated with ODA and the MDGs in the Pacific; there is also that of quality. By 'poor quality ODA' we refer to development assistance that is either given to inappropriate projects, tied to the purchase of goods from the ODA donor country, or spent primarily on paying for the services of developed country contractors and consultants.

To be of good quality ODA also needs to be rigorously evaluated, and ongoing

research needs to be funded to ensure that aid is spent in the most appropriate areas and given in the most appropriate manner.

In terms of ODA quality there are some reasons to be optimistic about current trends. Both New Zealand and Australia have untied aid, and New Zealand's development agency, NZAID, has developed a reputation within the region and in the broader development community, as an effective giver of ODA. There are also areas of considerable concern though. The track record of AusAID (Australia's development agency) in some areas has been murky. Aid/Watch (2005, p1), for example, notes that, in 2005 at least, over half of Australian ODA was paid to Australian companies. Aid/Watch also provides an example of an AusAid funded project in Papua New Guinea where overseas contractors were being paid over AUD$1000 a day for their work while local workers were receiving little over AUD$1 per day (Aid/Watch 2005, p1). Recent events do suggest that AusAID practice is changing for the better, although the extent of the change is not yet clear.

The potentially corrupting rise of 'no strings attached' ODA given by China and Taiwan in the region is also cause for concern. While, at the other end of the spectrum, some of the region's multilateral agencies have used conditionalities too zealously and for the wrong reasons - pushing for harmful economic reforms ([illegible] 2005). Because too much has been given poorly, ODA's legacy in the Pacific remains mixed. Yet the need for development assistance is real and until all ODA to the region is given well, the issue of ODA quality will remain a hurdle for meeting the MDGs.

External Powers and Power Imbalances

The final obstacle to meeting the MDG in the Pacific that we have identified is the actions of external governments and their potential to impact on the process of development. Because of the massive differences in size and wealth between the PICs and many external powers the actions of these powers – particularly when they are guided by ideology or self interest – have considerable potential to derail the development process in the region. Such potential may be manifest in different ways. As we have already noted, an across the board free trade approach to trade agreements with the PICs may well not be appropriate. Yet, New Zealand, Australia and the EU have all in recent years lobbied Pacific Island Countries to sign up to agreements of this nature (see, for example, Kelsey 2004).

Another example of external powers pursuing goals of their own in the region, and this having harmful impacts, is the ongoing competition for influence and embassies taking place between Taiwan and China. Influence is often obtained through giving ODA that is free of conventional conditionalities but which is often given on the tacit understanding that such aid will be in return for political or economic concessions. This aid, while still having some potential to help PICs, at the same time can have a considerable corrupting effect on local political processes. The flip side of this power imbalance is, of course, that relatively small concessions made by external powers can have major benefits for PICs. New Zealand's programme of taking seasonal migrants from PICs, for example, is an example of an initiative that could have real benefits for Pacific Island people (Maclellan and Mares, 2005). Unfortunately, such initiatives are still relatively rare and – as Australian opposition to a similar scheme proposed there shows – hard to come by. For this reason it is our conclusion that, overall, the actions of external powers continue to pose a

challenge to the meeting of the MDGs in the region.

Overcoming the Obstacles: what can be done if we want to meet the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific

Having listed what are considered to be major obstacles to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific, it is important to also counsel against pessimism. While the obstacles to the Pacific Island Countries obtaining the Millennium Development Goals (and, beyond this, achieving sustainable human development) are indeed significant at this point in time, the hurdles themselves are by no means insurmountable. This much is shown by the fact that some Pacific Island Countries already exceed almost all of the Millennium Development Goals while most Pacific Island Countries are on track to achieve some of them. Yet it is also clear that there is much hard work to be done in the region. What follows is a broad-brush discussion of the most promising paths to overcoming the obstacles to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific.

Improved Collection of Statistics

While the improved collection of statistics is not a way of attaining the Millennium Development Goals in its own right, it is a necessary undertaking if the true state of human development in the Pacific is to be assessed. Better statistics will also allow trends in the relevant Millennium Development Goal indicators to be tracked, and ought to enable the targeting of ODA and government programmes to areas of concern.

In light of this, recent work on assessing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals undertaken by the ADB and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in these areas should be seen as a step in the right direction. However, there is still much work to be done and government statistics agencies will also need continued strengthening. In addition to this, we are concerned that almost all of the current collection of relevant statistics in the Pacific is undertaken either by governments or by multilateral organisations: organisations which may have a vested interest in 'showing' good performance in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. While there is no evidence that, at present, in the Pacific, the collection of statistics by these organisations is being skewed by political considerations, experiences in other parts of the world show that this can occur. For this reason we believe that there needs to be some role for civil society organisations in the monitoring the collection and reporting of relevant statistics in the Pacific Island Countries. If this is undertaken (even if not in all countries or for all indicators) then civil society organisations can play a watchdog-like role in ensuring that manipulation of statistics does not occur. In this sense civil society organisations in the Pacific will be replicating the invaluable research undertaken in New Zealand by the New Zealand Poverty Measurement Project (NZPMP) in the late the 1990s. Through their research on poverty the NZPMP were able to show that significant deprivation was occurring in New Zealand even while politicians denied the very existence of poverty (Waldegrave et al 2003; Waldegrave & Stephens 2002). What is more, ultimately, the NZPMP researchers were able to influence government policy making it more pro-poor (Waldegrave & Stephens 2002).

Increased and Better Overseas Development Assistance

As has been noted, there is clearly a need for increased ODA in many Pacific Island Countries. At present, most Pacific Island Countries are struggling to adequately fund education services, deal with environmental issues, and cope with burgeoning health problems: all areas which ODA can play a helping role in. As such, an increase in ODA is an important requirement if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met in the Pacific.

While critics of ODA such as Hughes (2003) have argued that ODA is harming the Pacific (and harmful to development in general) their claims are not backed up by the balance of empirical evidence. While there have been some studies that suggest that ODA has a negative effect on economic development, many of these studies have been methodologically flawed and/or have failed to take into account the quality of the ODA given (Sachs 2005). More recent empirical studies of the effects of ODA on economic growth have shown that when the quality and type of ODA is taken into consideration, there is a positive correlation between well given ODA and economic growth (Clemens et. al. 2004b; Greenhill [illegible]; Sachs 2005). Furthermore, once the parameters for the "success" of ODA are broadened beyond economic growth to include social indicators the positive impacts of ODA become more pronounced (Fielding 2005; Vandemoortele 2002; Vandemoortele 2004).

Because of the role that the quality of ODA has in fostering better developmental outcomes, it is also important that donors in the Pacific concentrate on improving the manner in which ODA is given in the region.

Firstly, ODA needs to be given for the sole purpose of improving development outcomes in the region. It should not be tied to purchases of donor country goods, nor overly focused on expensive technical assistance. In the case of tied aid, recent moves by New Zealand and Australia to untie aid are very encouraging.

ODA also needs to be given free of conditionalities that compel governments to adhere to inappropriate economic policies. This is not to say that all conditionalities associated with aid are bad; indeed, conditionalities which prohibit aid being spent on military items or lining the pockets of officials are a desirable component of sensible ODA provision. However, conditionalities that require countries to excessively privatise their economies or open up to international trade should not be imposed. As we have noted, the Pacific Island Countries are unique both geographically and culturally, and there is no guarantee that ideologically driven economic policies will be appropriate for them. This much is particularly clear when one takes into account the fact that, where they have been applied, neo-liberal policies have failed to reduce poverty, not only in the Pacific, but also in most countries that have been subjected to them (Stiglitz 2002).

In addition to this, a significant portion of ODA should continue to be targeted to poverty reduction along with health and education. Furthermore, efforts should be made to ensure that no more ODA is spent on technical advice and foreign consultants than is absolutely necessary.

Finally, ODA needs to be given in a manner that does not foster corruption.

There is some evidence showing that, historically, ODA has led to corruption in developing countries (Greenhill & Watt 2005). Yet, ODA need not do this. Too often in the past when ODA was given it was given for geo-strategic reasons rather than with the aim of promoting development. Often, because of these geo-strategic motives, a blind eye was then turned to resulting corruption. Likewise, other ODA was simply given ineptly and with little thought to the potential corruption. Yet need not be given like this and we can dispense it in a manner that is free of geo-strategic considerations and which also uses the lessons learnt from the past and minimises the risk of corruption. In addition to this ODA can also be used, if given wisely and targeted in the right areas, to strengthen institutions. Careful investment in institution strengthening offers the potential for ODA to actually reduce corruption.

A More Nuanced Approach to Trade Policy and Trade Negotiations

As we have argued above – while trade has considerable potential to benefit the region and while trade liberalisation can be useful in some instances – an approach to trade in the Pacific that puts human development at the fore will not be one of 'free trade at all costs.' It will, instead, be pragmatic and take into account the very real constraints that the PICs face. Unfortunately, PACER negotiations and recent European Union EPA negotiations have been primarily about pursuing a free trade agenda. Something that seems to have been driven by the external powers involved (for discussion of this see, Kelsey 2004) and pressed for despite considerable reluctance from many PIC governments.

If international trade is going to play a constructive (rather than a destructive) role in development in the Pacific Island Countries, this needs to change.

Instead of carte blanche free trade what is needed in the region are trade agreements which enable individual countries to follow their own – context specific – pathways to development. In addition to this, where the end of existing trade agreements with other parts of the World (such as the Cotonou agreement) threaten livelihoods, there needs to be an active effort from governments and donors to ensure that the economic consequences for those affected are minimised, and that economic transition is as smooth as possible. One potential way that New Zealand and Australia could do this would be to support seasonal labour migration as proposed in the Pacific Plan.

An Approach to Economic Reform that does not Harm the Most Vulnerable

As noted previously, the free-trade agenda for the Pacific has been part of a broader neo-liberal project in the region. This project has seen Pacific Island Countries advised to cut government spending, privatise some formally state owned industries and implement other 'market friendly' economic reforms. In many cases the consequences of this for human development in the Pacific Island Countries have been negative. Of particular concern has been the cutting (or freezing) of state expenditures in key areas such as health and education. As Vandemoortele (2002) notes, the experiences of countries that have coupled economic growth with significant human development show that sustained social spending does not in any way hinder economic growth and is, at the same time, integral to human development. For this reason we would argue that, while Pacific Island Countries need to avoid accruing large budget deficits, they still need to maintain adequate social spending programmes. If government tax revenue is not sufficient for this to occur then the shortfall ought to be made up from ODA.

Along with maintaining social spending, a more considered approach to the privatisation of government enterprises needs to be undertaken in Pacific Island Countries. This approach ought to recognise that while, in some cases privatisation may be justified, it is not inevitably the right course of action. As a variety of international experiences show, state owned enterprises can be run efficiently and even profitably and so need not inevitably lead to increased government spending. Moreover, when privatisation leads to natural monopoly it is likely that price-setting will take place and consumers will suffer. Furthermore, in many Pacific Island Countries the state is a major employer, meaning that any sale of state owned enterprises or reduction in government staff needs to be assessed, not only with respect to economic management, but also with respect to the social and multiplier costs associated with staff loosing their jobs.

In saying this, we are not making the case for total public ownership in Pacific Island states nor are we maintaining that excessive government bureaucracies should never be cut; however, what is required is that any choices in these areas need to be assessed in light of potential social impacts. If a pragmatic, rather than a (free market ideological) approach is taken with regards to government spending, the Pacific Island Countries will have a much better chance of meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

[illegible] Attempts to Avoid Conflict as well as Conflict Resolution

As discussed above, for those Pacific Island Countries affected by it, conflict has played a discernable role in reducing their ability to meet the Millennium

Development Goals. Furthermore, conflict – once started – is not easily reversed. And for these reasons alone, we suggest that – if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met across the Pacific – Pacific Island Countries as well as Western states and interests need to act to ensure that, wherever possible, situations of conflict are avoided. Doing this will, of necessity, involve diplomatic efforts but it will also require that Western interests in the Pacific are managed in a way that does not promote conflict (or, in other words, management similar to that of the Panguna mine in Bougainville needs to be avoided in the future). When conflict does occur, outside intervention ought to be considered as part of attempts to resolve it. Along these lines the diplomatic, police and military interventions undertaken by the New Zealand and Australian governments in Bougainville and Solomon Islands ought to be commended and could serve – with some modifications – as models for future intervention. Those seeking to modify and improve on existing intentions would do well to look at the issues that RAMSI has encountered in Solomon Islands and ask whether a more diplomatic, partnership based approach, that paid careful attention to issues of development might have minimised some of the issues now apparent.

Strengthened Civil Society and Deepened Democracy

As we have mentioned, if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met in the Pacific there is significant need for improved governance in the region. However, international experience has shown that improved governance – especially if it is to address issues of social justice as well as economic efficiency – is not something that can be easily imposed from the outside via conditionality or international arm twisting. Instead, it is something that needs to be grown – in part at least – from within nations. Part of the process of growing good governance from within involves developing and strengthening democracy.

However, 'shallow democracy' – that which involves merely voting every few years – is, on its own, not a guarantee of good governance. What is required is a 'deeper'[28] form of democracy that couples voting with an active civil society (Putnam et al 1994). The UN Millennium Project (2005, p 32) explains the importance of the role of civil society in democratic governance in the following way:

> Strong Civil society engagement and participation are crucial to effective governance because they bring important actors to the fore, ensure the relevance of public investments, lead to discussions that best address the people's needs as they perceive them and serve as watchdogs for the development and implementation of government policies.

Above and beyond the reasons listed by the UN Millennium Project, civil society is important in a functioning democracy for in two additional reasons:

- It gives citizens the ability to speak with a collective voice (and thus a stronger voice than if they act only on their own).
- Civil society is able to act as a 'countervailing force' to manipulation of the democratic process by vested interests.

The good news, in relation to civil society in the Pacific is that there has been a region-wide rise in the number of civil society organisations in recent years (Naidu 2002; Tate, 2005). What is more, many of these new civil society organisations have been actively campaigning (along with more traditional civil

society organisations like progressive church groups) to promote social justice and environmental sustainability (Naidu 2002). This bodes well for human development in the region. However, at the same time, the challenges facing civil society in the Pacific are notable as well. In many cases civil society organisations in the Pacific lack the capacity and the financial resources to function effectively. Furthermore, often they are not equipped with sufficient information to lobby effectively. In addition to this, progressive civil society organisations in the Pacific, when lobbying for reform, often find themselves up against powerful vested interests. There is also considerable room for legal reform to create a more enabling legal environment for civil society.

For these reasons we believe that if civil society is to play a significant role in human development in the Pacific (and in enabling the Millennium Development Goals to be met) it needs outside assistance. Such assistance may involve (as is currently given) ODA to fund specific programmes; it should also involve funding that directly aids civil society organisations in capacity building and in overcoming obstacles that they face. Finally, assistance should be provided to Pacific civil society organisations to enable them to both globalise and localise. By globalising we mean CSOs acting in collaboration with other Pacific (and international) civil society groups, making use of a combined voice that is stronger than that of individual organisations working on their own. By localising we mean space being provided to allow domestic CSOs to develop in a manner that is most appropriate to the local context that they work within. If all this is done then civil society has the potential to be a powerful reforming force in the Pacific Island Countries.

Conclusion

A further consequence – uncommented on at the time by Hoyle – of the technological changes that now allow human beings to view images of their planet taken from space has been the 'shrinking' of the planet that we live on. While human beings and the ideas they carry with them have been roaming the globe for thousands of years and while, because of this, globalisation cannot be described as a new phenomenon, the fact remains that never before have the people of our planet been so interconnected. There is without doubt a 'global network society' that links just about all countries and their capitals in varying degrees to each other (Castells, 2000). Aeroplanes allow people to undertake journeys that would have once taken weeks or months in less than a day, while the internet means that papers such as this one can be read by someone in London within minutes of being put online in Fiji or New Zealand. International phone calls mean that people can communicate with friends and family members almost anywhere in the world, while the global financial system means that decisions made on the New York Futures Exchange can impact on the lives of Mayan farmers. Similarly, intercontinental missiles and the spread of global terrorism mean that the effects of conflict can be felt anywhere around the globe, while environmental interconnectedness means that the car purchasing choices of people in the Untied States or China may determine the future of entire island nations. Such interconnectedness brings with it two powerful reasons for people – even those living comfortably in the Developed World – to take note of the issues of development. Firstly, there is a moral reason: aware as we are of the plight of the nearly three billion people who live on less than two dollars a day, what does it say about us if we do nothing to assist them, or worse continue to prop up a global system that disadvantages them in many ways? Secondly, there is a practical reason: in an interconnected world, if we continue to ignore the

growing disparities of development taking place, it seems highly likely that we may find ourselves less immune to their negative consequences than we would like to think. For example, numerous recent studies have shown that countries with greater levels of inequality tend to be more violent (Wilkinson 2005); what does this tell us then about the risks of living in an increasingly unequal world? Johan Galtung's observations relating to structural violence have become a reality in many of the world's major cities where 'gated communities' amidst surrounding slums have become common place. Structural violence can be seen in the rich minority world and poor majority world divide.

Both of these points (moral and practical) seem important enough reason to pay attention to countries' progress with respect to the Millennium Development Goals. True, the Goals are imperfect indicators of development, but they are indicators nevertheless and, while their imperfections mean that they should not be seen as the final word in monitoring global development, they still make a reasonable starting point for the renewed commitment to the cooperative achievement of international development targets within broadly accepted timeframes.

For these reasons, the fact that many Pacific Island Countries are performing poorly with respect to the Millennium Development Goals ought to be cause for considerable concern – not only for the people of these countries but also for countries such as Australia and New Zealand who, thanks to culture, geography and history, are intricately involved in the region. The Pacific's struggle to meet the Goals ought also to serve as a wakeup call: the 'business as usual' approach to the Pacific is not working. And, if it is

continued, the outlook for the region is not likely to be positive.

As a region, the Pacific is far from a 'basket case' though and, as has been argued in this paper, the problems that confront it can be overcome. For this to occur however, business as usual needs to be replaced by a new approach to the Pacific[29]. Such a new approach will, by necessity, require that several things occur: firstly, the neo-liberal orthodoxy that has been imposed on the region needs to be reconsidered and adapted so that human development is brought to the fore; secondly, economic policies need to be designed taking into account the region's unique geography and culture; thirdly more ODA needs to be given to the region and its delivery needs to be considerably improved; fourthly, when it comes to trade and trade negotiations, the two regional powers need to stop acting with only their self interest at heart; fifthly, concerted efforts need to be made to prevent conflict in the region; and, finally, institutional reform needs to take place within Pacific Island Countries, ideally in a manner that couples reform with the deepening of democracy. Promoting civil society organisations is a sine quo non of this process.

If these actions are taken then the future of the Pacific and its peoples ought to be a hopeful one enhancing solidarity within and beyond Oceania.

Endnotes:

1. Because the Millennium Development Goals are a global set of targets, and because are hoped to be obtainable for even the least developed countries, often the targets have been set at very low levels. Because of this – for many of the targets – it should not be assumed that, because a target has been met for a country, the country need do no further work in the area.
2. As with women's sexual and reproductive rights, in the UN World Summit Outcome Document (United Nations 2005) explicit reference to some of these aspects of gender equality was made and it is hoped that this might translate into tangible changes to some of the MDG indicators. However, as it stands at present, it is unclear whether this will occur or not.
3. This problem with the measure has been discussed most fully by Pogge and Reddy (2002).
4. There is some correlation between the two, but it is not strong. When housing costs are factored in it becomes stronger; however, even then the strength of correlation suggests that other factors are at play.
5. See Perry (2002) for an explanation of this measure.
6. There is already a Millennium Development Indicator pertaining to literacy, which could be indicative of quality of schooling; yet in many PICs literacy statistics are derived using years of schooling completed as a proxy (Abbot & Pollard 2004). So, if one wants to avoid engaging in a tautology, in these countries, literacy can not be used to infer the quality of education.
7. It is worth remembering here that many of the Millennium Development Goal Indicators are relative measures (i.e. reducing poverty to half of 1990 levels). And while the Pacific may be the second worst region with respect to the Goals its 1990 baselines were significantly higher than many other areas. This means that the Pacific should not be considered to second least developed region in the World in any absolute sense.
8. No poverty data is available for the Solomon Islands.
9. As mentioned elsewhere, in many PICs, years of schooling are used as a proxy for literacy, so this indicator can't be considered indicative of education quality.
10. There is also some evidence that maternal mortality rates are under-reported in Papua New Guinea.
11. Malaria is restricted to these countries at present; however, it is plausible that due to climate change or other factors it may spread to other parts of the Pacific in the future.
12. Treatment costs for non-communicable diseases account for 11 percent of total health costs in Fiji, 27 percent in Samoa and 18 percent in Tonga (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004, p 79).

13. Of course the distinction between 'purely environmental' indicators and 'human related' environmental indicators is in some ways false as people's quality of life is still very much determined by the environment (and vice versa).
14. It is worth recalling here that Vandemoortele (2004) considers access to safe drinking water to be one of the least reliable Millennium Development Goal indicators.
15. See Da Costa (forthcoming) for a discussion of the curse of resource abundance in the context of East Timor.16. See UNDP & UNESCAP (2003) for brief discussion of the economic impact of extractive industry in Papua New Guinea.
17. It is worth noting that not all economic theory is supportive of complete free trade; New Trade Theory, for example, offers a theoretical case for the protection of infant industries. For a discussion of this see Krugman (1994).
18. In 2001 tariffs as a percentage of total tax revenue were: 64 percent in Kiribati; 57 percent in Vanuatu; 45 percent in Tuvalu; 36 percent in the Marshal Islands; 34 percent in Samoa; 32 percent in Fiji; 31 percent in Tonga; 25 percent in Solomon Islands; 24 percent in the Federated States of Micronesia; 23 percent in Papua New Guinea; 20 percent in Palau; and 19 percent in the Cook Islands (Scollay 2001, p 11).
19. Theoretically, price rises associated with VATs ought to be offset price reductions resulting from tariff reductions; however, in the case of Vanuatu, at least, this did not happen (Lennon 2005). Moreover, in many PICs staple produce is often grown locally (and thus not impacted on by tariffs) while it is 'luxury goods' (of little relevance to the poor) which are imported.
20. For a good case study of the problematic nature of the free trade agenda in the Pacific see Gay & Joy (n.d.) and their discussion of Vanuatu's failed attempt at joining the WTO. See also Lennon (2005)
21. The EU has planned for a fund to help countries deal with the costs of this transition; however, the funding for each individual county under this scheme is estimated to be less than a 10th of what is actually required (Oxfam, 2005).
22. The VAT is scheduled to be removed from some basic goods in 2005/06, it will remain on other items however.
23. For example, high HIV incidence has been shown to have significant economic consequences; consequences which in turn may effect countries' ability to pay for social services and meet Millennium Development Goal targets (UNFPA 2005).
24. In absolute numbers it is thought that as many as 28,000 people were HIV positive in Papua New Guinea by the end of 2004 (UNAIDS 2004c, p1).
25. For a discussion of the potential economic impacts of HIV on Papua New Guinea see Centre for International Economics (2002).

26. Tonga has also suffered from considerable violence in the form of riots which took place in Nuku'alofa, in November, 2006. Looting, arson and damage to property followed in the wake of the Tongan parliament's failure to deliberate democratic reforms. The Prime Minister and his allies' businesses, government offices and Chinese shops suffered the brunt of the damage and 8 persons died in the mayhem. The damage estimate from the rioting is claimed to be between US$US60 million and $US75 million. Hitherto regarded as one of the most stable Polynesian states with a pro-democracy movement committed to peaceful democratic reform, Tonga found itself in the midst of unprecedented political calamity and called for assistance from Australia and New Zealand.

27. The Pacific receives the highest level of ODA / capita in the World; however, this figure, as much as anything else reflects just how little ODA is given globally as opposed to how much ODA is given to the Pacific.

28. The term 'deepened democracy' comes from Barber (1984).

29. Sadly, with the possible exception of the seasonal migration proposal, the Pacific Plan fails to do this.

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GOAL 1 – ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Target 1.
Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Indicators
1. Proportion of population below $1 (1993 PPP) per day.
2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty].
3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption.

Target 2.
Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Indicators
4. Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age.
5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption.

GOAL 2 – ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Target 3.
Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Indicators
6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education
7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds

GOAL 3 – PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Target 4.
Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Indicators
9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education

10. Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old

11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector

12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

GOAL 4 – REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Target 5.
Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Indicators
13. Under-five mortality rate
14. Infant mortality rate
15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles

GOAL 5 – IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Target 6.
Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Indicators
16. Maternal mortality ratio
17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

GOAL 6 – COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Target 7.
Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Indicators
18. HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years
19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate
19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex
19b. Percentage of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
19c. Contraceptive prevalence rate

20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years

Target 8.
Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Indicators
21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
22. Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures
23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under DOTS (internationally recommended TB control strategy)

GOAL 7 – ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Target 9.
Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Indicators
25. Proportion of land area covered by forest
26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area
27. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per $1 GDP (PPP)
28. Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs
29. Proportion of population using solid fuels

Target 10.
Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation

Indicators
30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural
31. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural

Target 11.
By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Indicators
32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure

GOAL 8 – DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Target 12.
Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction - both nationally and internationally

Target 13.
Address the special needs of the least developed countries. Includes: tariff and quota-free access for least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction

Target 14.
Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)

Target 15.
Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and International measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS)

Target 16.
In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent

Indicators
45. Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, each sex and total

Target 17.
In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

Indicators
46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

Target 18.
In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Indicators
47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population
48. Personal computers in use per 100 population and Internet users per 100 population

Table Source: UN Millennium Project n.d (b)