# Migration Agreements and Regional Integration in the Pacific

by
Graeme Hugo
ARC Australian Professorial Fellow,
Professor of Geography, and
Director of the Australian Population and
Migration Research Centre,
The University of Adelaide
and
Richard Bedford
Professor of Population Geography
National Institute of Demographic and Economic Analysis
University of Waikato and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Auckland University of Technology

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# Outline of Presentation

- **Introduction**
- **Context**
- **Regional Fora for Discussion on Migration**
- **Engagement in Organisations Beyond the Pacific**
- **Formal Linkages with Pacific Rim Organisations**
- **Looking to the Future**
- **Conclusion**

# Migration and Development is of Particular Relevance in the Pacific

- Of all world regions the Pacific has the highest per capita level of international mobility amongst its resident populations, especially those in Polynesia and Micronesia, and its regional economy is the most dependent on remittances.

- Of all world regions it will experience the most rapid growth of population in the high mobility groups aged 15-34 years over the next two decades and there is limited capacity to absorb them in the workforces of national economies.

- The Pacific has become a focus of the global debate on climate change induced migration because of the vulnerability of low atoll island groups like Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Tokelau and Tuvalu to inundation if sea levels rise.

- The relatively small populations of most Pacific nations mean that migration has the potential to have a greater impact on their demography, economy and social structure and influence the political stability of the region.
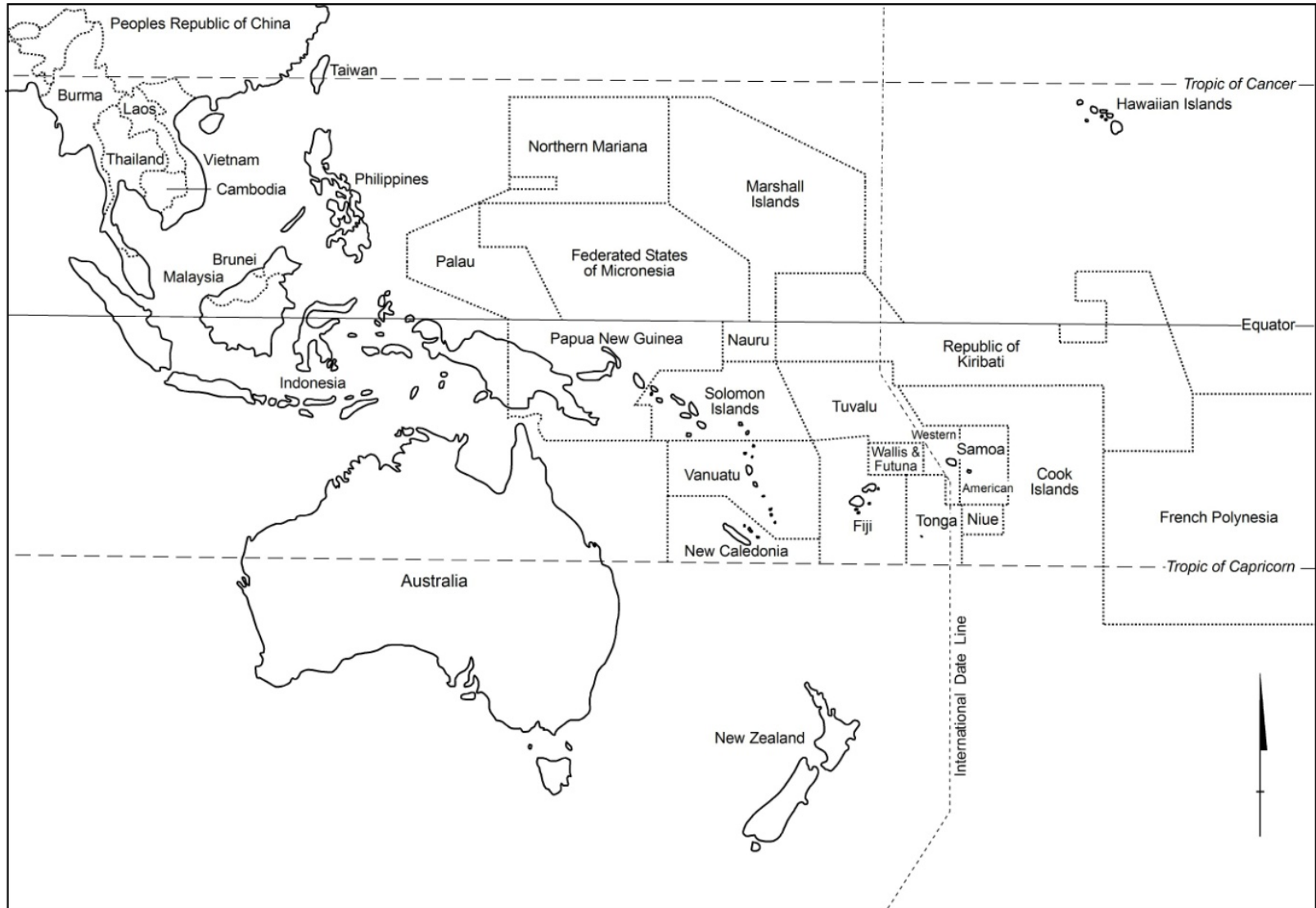
# Until recently international dialogue on migration among Pacific countries has been limited

- **South Pacific Commission (now Secretariat of the Pacific Community)**
- **Pacific Forum Annual Meetings**

# For migration and development policies to be effective requires cooperation

- Between origin and destination
- Bilateral, regional and multilateral level

# Pacific Island Countries

# Classification of Pacific Island Countries by Resource Endowments and Migration

Source:     Appleyard and Stahl, 1995;  Stahl and Appleyard, 2007

**Fully furnished**
Fiji
PNG
Solomon Islands
Vanuatu

Have sufficient resources for sustained development with appropriate development policies (1995).  In 2005 reconsidered that PSV in need of short term safety valve migration as an adjunct to development and to ease secondary problems.  In Fiji declining job opportunities necessitate migration.

**Partly furnished**
Tonga
Western Samoa

MIRAB economies but have potential to achieve sustainable higher level of domestic output if aid and remittances properly harnessed.

**Unfurnished**
Tuvalu
Kiribati
Tokelau
Niue
Cook Islands

Migration is essential because of resource constraints and environmental change.

# Key Differences within the Pacific

Melanesia    87% of population, 97% of land area,
rapid population growth, 2.24% pa,
limited migration - FiJi main exception.

Micronesia   Kiribati, Nauru -links to Australia, rest to US,
significant migration to US,
5.4% of population, 0.64% pa growth rate.

Polynesia    7.6% of population, 0.83% pa growth rate

**Another important difference from the perspective of migration…Independent States (90% of the population) Vs Freely Associated States where formal connections with a metropolitan state offers access to resources, opportunities and migraton**

# The Freely Associated States

France        New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna

USA           American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands,
              Republic of Marshall Islands, FSM, Palau

New Zealand   Tokelau, Cook Islands, Niue

There is general agreement that in the new 'age of migration' governments cannot aspire to stop migration flows but they are best advised to develop effective management of that mobility which maximises national interest while preserving the integrity of borders and human rights.

# Major Regional Organisations

- **Secretariat of the Pacific Community (est 1947)**
- **Pacific Islands Forums (est 1971)**

# Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER)

- **Pacific Fora and Australia and New Zealand**
- **Trade Facilitation, development of a regional FTZ**
- **Issue of "movement of natural persons"**

# Melanesian Spearhead Group (1983)

- **Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia**
- **Increasingly active**
- **Initiatives on skill exchange**

# Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference

"for immigration authorities to be mutually working together to manage the Pacific gateways, and thereby contributing to the regional objectives of security, economic growth, sustainable development and good governance."

# Engagement Beyond the Pacific

- **ESCAP**
- **APEC**
- **Asia-Pacific Regional Initiatives on Migration – Bali Process**
- **Intergovernmental Asia Pacific Consultations of Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC)**

# Formal Linkages with Pacific Rim Nations

**"Colonisation has left a complex legacy of legal and political associations in the Pacific"**

**(Opeskin and MacDermott, 2010, 2)**

# Colonisation and Migration

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>US and France</u> | Citizenship and Migration opportunities |
| <u>New Zealand</u> | Samoa<br>Pacific Access Scheme<br>RSE |
| <u>Australia</u> | SWP |
| <u>UK</u> | No arrangements |

# Looking to the Future

- The projected 85 percent increase in the region's population from just under 10 million in 2010 to over 18 million by 2050.  The mobile youth population (15-34) could increase from 3.4 million in 2010 to 5.7 million by 2050.

- The possibility of a doubling of the share of the region's population that is living in urban places in the islands from around 25 percent in 2010 to the current global average of 50 percent by 2050.

- The impact on the region's population of the projected warming of the world's climate and associated implications for the region's El Nino and La Nina weather patterns and sea-surface temperatures and levels.

# Obligations of Pacific Rim Countries
### (Opeskin and MacDermott, 2010, 3-4)

- These states owe PIC's obligations arising from past and present exploitation and injustices. These include, for example, the mining of phosphate in islands like Nauru (Connell, 2006) and Ocean Island in Kiribati which has massively depleted land resources as well as nuclear testing. In addition, there are issues of the responsibility of the global north for the excessive greenhouse gas emissions responsible for rising sea levels.

- Ethical obligations to provide development assistance. It is clear that a 'development friendly' migration policy can be a significant plank in assisting development in origin countries (DFID, 2007).

- The Pacific is an important global region from a strategic security perspective.  This is particularly the case for the Pacific Rim countries, especially Australia and New Zealand.  Migration has in the past provided a 'safety valve' for social and economic frustration with lack of opportunity in some Pacific microstates (Ware, 2005, 451) and it will be an important element in the future security of the region, especially in volatile areas of Melanesia.

- A second consideration must be the ageing of Pacific Rim country populations that will create significant labour shortages in both lower and higher skill areas.   The Pacific could be an important source for such labour.  While we must not fall into a 'demographic determinism' trap of assuming imbalances between countries with declining workforce age populations and those where they are increasing, there can be no doubt that immigration will be an important element in the future of Pacific Rim countries where it indeed has been for the last century.  The issue becomes the extent to which those countries give the Pacific special consideration in this immigration given proximity and mutual relationships and obligations.

# The Pacer Plus Negotiations

- **Strong push by PICs for migration to be included**
- **Resistance for Australia and New Zealand**

# What Will Shape Regional Approaches?

- **Burgeoning youth population**
- **New political powers – China and others**
- **Increased focus on security**
- **Environmental factors and climate change**
- **The Melanesian Spearhead Group**
- **Internal politics of Australia and New Zealand**