

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

New Regional Solarisation Project to Improve Resilience in the Pacific

Suva, Fiji, 8 June 2020 – A regional initiative signed in Suva this week will see Solar Photovoltaic (PV) systems installed on buildings of national significance. The Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji and the United Nations Resident Coordinator, MCO Office based in Fiji have endorsed the multi-country project for the Solarisation of Head of State Residences in PIDF member countries through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

The funding from the Government of India is valued at US\$1.2m and is aimed at empowering government leaders in PIDF member states in their advocacy role for clean energy and climate action. This role is now more important as new global threats posed by pandemics like COVID-19 exacerbate the ongoing impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable nations, particularly in Pacific Island Countries (PICs). The devastation brought by TC Harold to Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, and Tonga reiterates this point clearly.

The PV systems will be installed on buildings of national significance, such as the executive administrative residence of a country, with the goal of giving first-hand experience to country leaders of the benefits that renewable technologies can offer. By doing so, leaders can then use their experiences as a tool for engaging the general public to inspire wider adoption of solar energy, and perhaps other renewable energy technologies. The target sites for this Project includes Fiji, Federated States Micronesia, Palau, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The implementation partner, Solar Head of State (SHOS), has already launched similar projects at the Presidential Palace of the Maldives, the public residence of the Governor-General in St. Lucia, and at the Office of the Prime Minister of Jamaica.

“It adds value in helping Pacific Islands and Timor Leste address a key development priority which is a need/quest for investment in renewable energy and enhancing resilience in the face of climate change,” said the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Resident Representative, Levan Bouadze in his opening remarks.

The Secretary General of PIDF, Ambassador Solo Mara also highlighted in his remarks that this multi-country project is an example of a whole-of-society approach, specifically a multi stakeholder partnership, with partners from the public and private sectors, as well as civil society.

The PIDF’s strategic approach to partnership is guided by its mandate to foster multi-stakeholder engagement focused on the comparative advantages of South-South Cooperation and aimed at developing inter-regional and intra-regional Small Island Developing States (SIDS) partnerships to

benefit the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate-resilience in the Pacific Islands.

This multi-country project is an example of a whole-of-society approach, specifically a multi stakeholder partnership, with partners from the public and private sectors, as well as civil society partners of the PIDF, such as the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO). The PIDF acknowledges and thank the Government of India for this incredible support and commends UNDP's genuine partnership and look forward to working in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders towards the effective implementation of this very important project.



UNDP Resident Representative, Levan Bouadze, Her Excellency Smt. Padmaja, the High Commissioner of India in the Republic of Fiji, Sanaka Samarasinha, the United Nations Resident Coordinator, and Ambassador Solo Mara, the Secretary General, Pacific Islands Development Forum, after the signing.



Signing by Sanaka Samarasinha, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Ambassador Solo Mara, the Secretary General, Pacific Islands Development Forum. UNDP Resident Representative, Levan Bouadze and her Excellency Smt. Padmaja, the High Commissioner of India in the Republic of Fiji standing in the background.

Background of the Project

Partnerships play an *essential* role in the Solarisation of Head of State Residences in PIDF member countries project. Multiple organizations based in different countries and regions of the world are involved, including from the public sector, private sector and civil society: i) in the PICs, partners include the offices of the head of state/buildings of national importance, power utilities and private companies; ii) at the regional level, partners include PIDF and UNDP; and, iii) at the international level, partners include the international NGO Solar Head of State, the Government of India, and the [United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation \(UNOSSC\)](#).

The multiple partners are also reflected in the funding of this project. The government of India will provide US\$400,000 via the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and US\$700,000 via the India-UN Development Partnership Fund Commonwealth Window. The private sector company Solaria has pro bono contributed solar PV panel's equivalent to an estimated total of US\$90,000 (US\$7,500 x 12 solar PV systems). PIDF and SHOS in-kind contribution are equivalent to an estimated total of US\$120,000 towards the public awareness campaigns (US\$10,000 x 12 solar PV systems).



SOLAR HEAD OF STATE



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The PIDF is a multilateral and multi-stakeholder organization focusing on a distinctive Pacific model of green growth in blue economies aligned to sustainable development principles. The PIDF is a permanent observer to the United Nations and is a member of the Inter-agency Collaborative Group on the Global Partnership on SIDS. It is a space for catalyzing, mobilizing and mainstreaming action in support of sustainable development through green/blue economy in Pacific Island Countries. PIDF is an action-oriented platform to identify innovative solutions and works closely with Regional and International counterparts to engage state and non-state actors to develop high-impact collaboration on sustainable development and poverty reduction in the Pacific Islands. Visit us on www.pidf.int. Follow us on Twitter: @PIDF01 or Like us on Facebook: Pacific Islands Development Forum

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