



TE TANGO AKATEREANGA MONI O TE IPUKAREA  
MINISTRY OF FINANCE & ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS

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**Media Release – From Manihiki to the Board of the largest climate fund in the world**



Ms. Tessa Vaetoru, a Development Programme Manager with the Development Coordination Division of MFEM has been appointed by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) as their alternate Board Member representing Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Board.

This marks a historic milestone for the Cook Islands and a step forward to advance the interests and special needs of the SIDS. Her strong calibre of experience on Climate Finance includes leading and assisting on a number of national programs, as well as being a member of the Cook Islands Government delegations to international climate change negotiations.

Tessa's multifaceted interests and active engagements go beyond the board room into her community and environment. She is part of Women and Youth associations and a representative on a conservation and sustainable management board due to her genuine passion for her Ipukarea (country).

Born and raised on one the most remote islands of the Cook Islands, Manihiki - informally known as the Island of Pearls, Tessa is all too familiar with life on remote and isolated islands that are at the forefront and suffering the consequences of climate change.

Tessa is the epitome of Women - the Precious Pearl - of the Cook Islands. E Vahine Toa – a term that encompasses vitality, passion, leadership, morals and tradition. She stands on strong principles for the environment, the community and family.

This milestone is also a timely celebration of the 2023 International Women's Day on 8 March, as the election of Tessa Vaetoru also marks a historic achievement for Pacific Women, as the First Pacific Island Women to hold a seat on the Green Climate Fund Board.

The GCF Board is charged with the governance and oversight of the Green Climate Fund. It was established by 194 sovereign governments, party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).



The GCF Board allocates several billions of dollars annually to countries in the global south to deal with the impacts of climate change and build a green economy. Since its start of operations in 2014, GCF has awarded about US\$18 million to the Cook Islands for projects in the areas of renewable energy, climate information, vulnerability studies and institutional capacity building.

A number of projects in the Asia-Pacific region, including the Cook Islands, which are supported by GCF include;

[Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Investment Program](#)

[Enhancing Climate information and knowledge services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean.](#)

Tessa and her team of advisors will attend the 35th Meeting of the Green Climate Fund in Songdo, Korea, from 13-16 March 2023.

**END**