



## **Oxfam Submission on New Zealand's International Cooperation for Sustainable Development**

2 October 2018

The world is ever-more globalised, and as a consequence, more connected. As the New Zealand government's new Pacific diplomacy principles attest, it is no longer possible to separate the well-being, safety and prosperity of people living in New Zealand from people living anywhere else. We are an interconnected global human family, and as such, New Zealand's domestic and foreign policy must respond to this reality.

The SDGs are founded upon the principle of universalism, meaning that we – humanity – are in this all together. MFAT has a great opportunity to build on its 'new Pacific diplomacy' and its commitment to the SDGs, to grow development diplomacy across the entire ministry and government. Through its international cooperation for sustainable development (ICSD), New Zealand can ensure its foreign policy balances New Zealand's diverse interests overseas. New Zealand's future prosperity and peace depends on a peaceful and prosperous world where all people enjoy their basic human rights.

Oxfam New Zealand welcomes this opportunity to provide ideas for MFAT's new International Cooperation for Sustainable Development Policy Statement. Oxfam New Zealand is a New Zealand registered Charitable Trust that is a legally autonomous member of the global Oxfam Confederation of 19 affiliates in 86 countries. Oxfam New Zealand works in partnership with colleagues in South East Asia, and Oxfam in the Pacific (a registered Trust in Fiji), to deliver international development programmes on the ground, conduct advocacy and campaigns that amplify the voices of the marginalised, and respond to people in crisis.

The recent shifts in New Zealand's approach to international development cooperation hold great promise. We have been pleased to see the refocus on holistic, sustainable development challenges, and a clear articulation of values under-pinning this work, including human rights. Oxfam views itself as a key partner with the New Zealand government in our collective international sustainable development efforts. With the complexity of international sustainable development challenges, we all need to work together. Oxfam would be pleased to act as a key resource and active partner with the New Zealand government in our shared goals of a world where all people can enjoy basic opportunities, reach their full potential, and realise their human rights. We look forward to ongoing engagement in expanding our collective thinking on the policy and programming responses to humanity's most pressing challenges.

Oxfam has previously submitted ideas to MFAT about climate change adaptation and financing, and we append these ideas to this submission.

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The below both summarises Oxfam’s key recommendations, in response to the consultation questions, and outlines the structure of this document.

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## **Foundation Principles**

### **Human Rights: Build peaceful, just and inclusive societies**

Oxfam New Zealand believes that human rights are the foundation for international sustainable development cooperation. Only through progressively realising human rights can we leave no-one behind. This requires a commitment to ensuring that everyone contributes to the creation of opportunities, shares the benefits of development, and participates in decision-making. New Zealand has always been a strong global actor in progressing human rights, and we suggest that human rights are both an appropriate and necessary foundation for New Zealand's international cooperation for sustainable development. Poor people across the world state they feel powerless, insecure and excluded from society (High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 2013, p. 2). For the twelfth successive year, global freedom has declined (Freedom House, 2018) and global peace has now reached the lowest level in over a decade (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2018). Alongside this, isolationism and nationalism are increasing (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2018, p. 4). Everywhere across the world there is a need to support and expand human rights, including people's active engagement in sustainable development activities. We would like to see this underpin New Zealand's international development cooperation efforts. Without attention to human rights, we cannot eradicate poverty and inequality, or survive climate change.

### **The SDGs: Leave No-One Behind**

The Sustainable Development Goals acknowledge the importance of human rights. Indeed, Agenda 2030's core principle – leave no-one behind – is a human rights principle. Oxfam believes this core principle should be the foundation for the New Zealand government's international cooperation for sustainable development. The SDGs are an important part of every country's efforts to ensure everybody, everywhere enjoys the benefits of development. They recognise that the traditional lines between 'developed' and 'developing' countries are increasingly blurred. The idea of universality means that it is just as important for the New Zealand government to achieve the SDGs as it is any other country. We understand MFAT has the responsibility for coordinating the New Zealand government's response to the SDGs. We believe that this should move to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. For New Zealand's ICSD efforts, we suggest MFAT focuses on being an active global partner through its international sustainable development work (SDG17), and supports partner countries to achieve the SDGs based on their own SDG plans.

### **Work with complexity**

Oxfam believes that successful sustainable development involves working with and within complex human and planetary systems, aiming to preserve the environment and advance human rights. These systems involve multiple stakeholders with multiple perspectives, in varying institutional contexts. Acknowledging that sustainable development requires working with complexity requires a focus not only on the components of the system – the people, the rules and norms, and the ideas – but also on the relationships between these components. It is the dynamic interaction between these factors, and the external environment, that both constrains and supports positive change. Working with complex systems should be based on a clear understanding of the relationships between and within the various systems involved, and be designed to allow for flexibility and adaptability by local actors, moving towards a mutually agreed overall outcome. This also requires a focus on power, because power is a central component of all complex human systems.

### **Attend to power dynamics, including between women and men**

MFAT needs to engage with the power issues inherent in all sustainable development activities. Working to ensure local communities and governments are actively involved and lead their own development can be incredibly influential in ensuring the inclusion of all

stakeholders within development initiatives. However, this can also lead to processes of exclusion where elites, or those with vested interests, at global or local levels, can exacerbate exclusion and further entrench inequalities. Development initiatives are more effective for poverty reduction when all stakeholders, especially citizens and marginalized communities, are actively involved in the negotiation of development plans and programmes.

In order to engage effectively with inclusive development processes, therefore, we need policies that actively encourage all development actors to identify, analyse and engage with power and privilege, and the ways in which exclusion or inclusion impact on development processes and outcomes. This is particularly so for relations between women and men, given the structural inequalities that perpetuate women's discrimination.

Alongside the evolution in complexity thinking, international development academics and practitioners increasingly acknowledge the importance of power and politics in international development action (Booth & Unsworth, 2014; Carothers & de Gramont, 2013; Thinking and Working Politically Community of Practice, 2017). This analysis, including the growing recognition of feminist principles in development, highlights the need for a sophisticated understanding of power relations in the contexts in which development actors intervene, particularly the power relations between genders. Development will only be effective if we build long-term relationships, work within systems and understand complex contexts, carry out political analysis, including on gender dynamics, and explore our place within power dynamics.

**Oxfam recommends that:**

- human rights underpin New Zealand's ICSD
- the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet coordinate New Zealand's response to the SDGs
- MFAT focus on being a constructive global partner in sustainable development (SDG17), and ensuring our international cooperation efforts support partner countries to achieve the SDGs based on their own SDG plans.
- New Zealand's ICSD involves a focus on complexity and attention to power dynamics, including those inherent in gender relations.

## What are the most critical global sustainable development challenges?

Oxfam acknowledges that great progress has been made in reducing poverty (Kenny, 2012; Pinker, 2012; United Nations Development Programme, 2016), which shows just what we can achieve through concerted action. Yet, significant challenges exist to the protection and expansion of human rights. In fact, these challenges have the potential to reverse progress made and must be addressed to achieve sustainable development for all. Many of these challenges are collective action issues, requiring coordinated and sophisticated action simultaneously across national, regional and international levels. New Zealand has the potential to respond to these challenges, which Oxfam outlines below.

- **Poverty<sup>1</sup> (SDG 1, 2)**

In our work across the world Oxfam sees far too many people still enduring extreme poverty, most of whom who live rurally, have little education, are young, and are mostly employed in the agricultural sector. Yet, even those who no longer suffer extreme poverty can hardly be called 'affluent'. Those who have not yet achieved a daily income of US\$10 remain highly vulnerable to falling back into extreme poverty – the 'strugglers'. This group of people are likely to have a primary education, and be informal workers in peri-urban and urban areas. Oxfam suggests that the difference between the extreme poor and the poor requires a holistic perspective of poverty and inequality, and their various manifestations.

- **Inequality<sup>2</sup> (SDG 10)**

Poverty and inequality go hand in hand. Globally, income inequality is unacceptably high. Yet, Oxfam views inequality holistically, involving discrimination and denial of basic human rights. Many groups have been excluded from the development process due to their gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, race, religion, nationality, location, class, caste, ethnicity, political affiliation, and other factors. These different human characteristics intersect in any individual or community, which means that people experience discrimination, exclusion or oppression in simultaneous and intersecting ways. Inequality is exacerbated through the intentional or unintentional policies and practices of exclusion, coupled with global systems and structures that have not prioritised the development of all. At the heart of inequality are barriers of entrenched privilege, power and exclusion.

- **Gender inequality (SDG 5)**

Gender inequality is one of the most significant and pervasive global injustices. There is no way sustainable development can be achieved while leaving half of the population behind. Globally we have seen a significant number of donors and NGOs investing in programmes that focus on women's and girls' empowerment, but which is only part of the gender equality journey. Oxfam recognises that in order to be truly inclusive, gender equality also needs to focus on men and boys, on the lived realities of those who identify as transgender or intersex, and the intersectionality of the wide range of forms of oppression. However, the recent crisis around sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse (in the aid sector but also within wider society as a whole) – a crisis which Oxfam is actively working to address – indicates that the commitment to gender transformative processes has been limited, and that the core issues of inequality, power and privilege have yet to be resolved in global international development cooperation efforts.

- **People on the move<sup>3</sup> (SDG 1-5, 8-11, 13-16)**

The last decades have seen the biggest ever human migration, from rural areas to cities, from low and middle-income countries to high-income countries. This will continue, and New Zealand's ICSD needs to appropriately respond to the various

push and pull factors that cause people to move. Climate change will exacerbate this movement, not the least as a result of increasingly violent weather events such as drought, storms and floods. It will be the poorest and most vulnerable who are forced to move, often to marginal or overcrowded land. The number of people forcibly displaced is at the highest level since the end of the Second World War, many of whom are displaced within their own country.

- **Climate change (SDG 13)**

As Pacific leaders recently reiterated, climate change presents the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and wellbeing of Pacific people. This is already highlighted as a priority for New Zealand, both domestically and internationally. The IPCC policymakers' leak from their 1.5 degree report indicated that the status quo will see us exceed 1.5 degrees Celcius by about 2040. We are fast moving past the point where vulnerable people are able to adapt, so while we must focus on mitigation and adaptation to prevent the worst, we must also prepare for action when adaptation is no longer possible. This includes addressing loss and damage issues.

- **Environmental degradation (SDG 6, 11, 12-15)**

Alongside climate change, other environmental degradation also threatens human existence. Pollution, water scarcity, floods, deforestation, and desertification all impact upon our ability to sustain ourselves (UNSDSN, 2013, p. 10). To address these existential challenges, we must acknowledge that human systems are intertwined with the Earth's systems, and that our responses need to be holistic and integrated.

- **Conflict and fragility (SDG 16)**

Conflicts drive 80% of all humanitarian needs, while the share of global poor living in fragile and conflict-affected situations is projected to reach 46% by 2030 (World Bank). The Pacific is not immune from these challenges, with numerous countries having recently experienced civil violence in the past decade, and PNG in particular continuing to experience this phenomenon.

## What are the most critical challenges in the Pacific?

These global challenges are reflected across the Pacific region, to different degrees in different countries. Oxfam works closely with Pacific communities and our colleagues at Oxfam in the Pacific. We see a Pacific region that is diverse and expansive, with a wealth of cultures, languages and natural resources. Many countries have cultural support systems, particularly the extended family, which provide social safety nets in hard times. Unfortunately, in some places these systems are breaking down as the cash economy develops and people leave their villages in search of opportunities in urban areas. Many countries are Large Ocean States with significant natural resources, yet small and remote populations create challenges for employment generation and service provision.

The Pacific region is geographically a region, and there are commonalities across it, particularly at a sub-regional level. Yet there is also great diversity. We note that development levels and needs vary greatly across the different Pacific Island Countries. In terms of development trajectories, it is becoming less accurate to talk of 'The Pacific', and more appropriate to speak of 'Pacifics'. In particular, significant governance issues in Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu constrain development, and these countries are among those with projected future financial challenges in meeting human development needs.<sup>4</sup>

While we focus on key challenges below, Oxfam knows that there is great wealth in every country in the Pacific region, embodied first and foremost in the people.

- **Hardship and poverty<sup>5</sup> (SDG 1, 2)**  
Oxfam sees hardship and vulnerability as increasing concerns in many Pacific Island Countries. While extreme poverty is often avoided due to subsistence livelihoods, this is not always the case: in many Pacific Island Countries too many people are no longer able to meet their basic needs, including adequate nutrition.
- **Inequality<sup>6</sup> (SDG 10)**  
Inequality is a rising issue in several Pacific Island Countries. There are specific population groups who are being left behind, such as the young, the elderly, the less well-educated, the poor, those with a disability, and women and girls. In some places, particularly Papua New Guinea, the lack of opportunities for young men and eroding cultural structures contribute to violence and low-level civil conflict.
- Oxfam's Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index highlights that several Pacific Island Countries do not have the right mix of progressive social spending, taxation systems and labour rights in place to prevent and reduce inequality (Oxfam International & Development Finance Institute, 2017).
- **Gender inequality (SDG 5)**  
Women and girls across the Pacific face a range of discriminations, both at the individual and community level, and through structural norms and rules that perpetuate discrimination. This cuts across all spheres of society, from land ownership, to political participation, to education, to sexuality. There is no way sustainable development can be achieved while leaving half of the population behind. Women and girls are resilient and strive each day to realise their rights. Yet because of entrenched power dynamics, women and girls fight structural discrimination, which requires collective action and support to change.

- **Youth<sup>7</sup> (SDG 3, 4, 5, 8)**  
 Oxfam recognises that young people face a range of challenges and opportunities. Young people are not simply the representatives of the future, but are agents of the present, with their own aspirations to make decisions that will impact on them and their families, now and in the future. Pacific youth need opportunities to feel included in society and to actively engage in economic, social, political and cultural processes and structures, as well as ensuring opportunities are available for meaningful education and employment. Specific groups of young people experience greater marginalisation, including those who live rurally, are women, have a disability, identify as LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex), or who are not in education, employment or training.
- **People on the move (SDG 1-5, 8-11, 13-17)**  
 Like everywhere, Oxfam sees people on the move across the Pacific, from rural to urban areas, and from less developed countries to more developed countries. To maximise benefits and to prevent inequalities, this movement needs to be supported by appropriate legislation and policy responses, both within countries and between countries. Particularly within countries, people are often moving in search of services, not only employment, due to underinvestment in rural areas.
- **Climate change (SDG 13)**  
 Oxfam sees the significant impacts climate change is having on Pacific Island communities everywhere, and the efforts people are making to adapt. The Pacific is one of the most vulnerable to natural disasters, and the effects of climate change can amplify the risk from numerous natural hazards, such as drought, storms and flooding. As already recognised by New Zealand, this is a crucial challenge to address in our ICSD, as part of both longer-term development programming, and in humanitarian response, readiness and disaster risk reduction initiatives. Please see Oxfam's climate change action submission for further detail.
- **Agriculture, coastal fisheries and sustainable livelihoods (SDG 8, 14-15)**  
 Particularly in the large Melanesian countries, most people live in rural and remote areas. In conjunction with this, subsistence and semi-subsistence food production comprises a significant part of life, and the economy, for most Pacific Island Countries. Both agriculture and coastal fisheries provide a food source and a source of income or trading. Agriculture and fishing are crucial for sustainable livelihoods, yet they are increasingly under threat due to the impacts of climate change, requiring an adaptive approach.
- **Oceans and the Blue Economy (SDG 14)**  
 With 98% of the Pacific Islands region being ocean, the ocean and its extensive resources remain central to the wealth and wellbeing of Pacific Islanders. Oceans contribute to employment and economic development in key sectors, such as tourism and fisheries. With rising ocean temperatures, ocean acidification, and other changes damaging the critical ecosystems on which Pacific communities and countless other people depend, the effective governance of this resource is crucial. There are several barriers to this, including limited transparency, and few spaces and processes for meaningful community engagement. The technical capacity of civil society organisation to effectively monitor and influence relevant policy is also weak.
- **Governance (SDG 1-17)**  
 There is a diversity of governance systems across Pacific Island Countries. For example, Samoa has had one political party govern since 1982, providing relative stability. In contrast, Melanesian states, with their diverse languages, cultures and

localised power structures, have significant instability in governance, and clientelist politics. One commonality across all countries is the coexistence of modern nation-state institutions alongside traditional governance systems. Governance challenges are present in all Pacific Island Countries, but perhaps most challenging in Nauru, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. These governance challenges erode the custodianship of natural resources for people in Pacific Island Countries, and the fair and accessible provision of services, employment, and infrastructure to all people. A strong media and civil society are central to good governance, yet these are also weak in several countries. Further, poor governance can go hand in hand with varying degrees of conflict, a situation that several Pacific Island Countries have experienced, and continue to, particularly Papua New Guinea.

## Aotearoa New Zealand's Kaupapa

New Zealand has an opportunity to step-up to the challenge and offer creative approaches to build a world where all prosper and thrive. From being the first to realise women's suffrage, to impelling action during the Rwandan genocide, New Zealand's influence often outreaches its size. Oxfam believes that New Zealand's approach should be built on our own experiences of social progress, and our broad strengths as a country. These include, our cultural focus on relationships and connections, our smallness, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, our track record in human rights and good governance, and our diverse people. Oxfam also sees the five new Pacific diplomacy principles as a potentially trail-blazing approach to foreign policy, and this is an area we would like to see New Zealand develop both intellectually and practically.

- **Manaakitanga: Relationships and connections**  
People in the countries we work in value New Zealand's approach to them, with our focus on relationships, provision of useful advice and helpfulness in reform processes. This was a key finding from a significant global study asking developing country leaders to assess donors, such as New Zealand (Custer, Rice, Masaki, Latourell, & Parks, 2015). New Zealand has cultivated an identity as a country that works constructively with others on the international stage, with a sense of empathy with smaller and less powerful countries. It is this relational approach that can allow us to engage in robust policy dialogue with partner countries, and that underpins the Pacific Reset diplomacy principles (particularly the principles of friendship and understanding).
- **Our smallness is our strength**  
This focus on relationships in the international arena links with our smallness. Our small size is an advantage, allowing experimentation and agility in trying out new ideas. As a small state, we are often not viewed as a threat by other states, which means that along with our relationships-focus, we can facilitate and convene, while also advancing human rights in a non-threatening manner. Smallness also offers us opportunities to select niche areas to focus on, such as our global championing of the Pacific region or our track record on human rights, and engage in focused policy dialogue. New Zealand has the potential to "become a pioneer on finding new ways to think and work" in international sustainable development (Green, 2017).
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi**  
Our international development work can benefit from New Zealand's rich indigenous knowledge and praxis. To some extent, our strength in relationships is founded on the ever-evolving partnership between Māori and the Crown, embodied in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It is critical that we recognise New Zealand's history of colonisation and oppression, and use this recognition to move us beyond mainstream international sustainable development paradigms, which have been critiqued as often perpetuating historic power imbalances in new ways. In recognising Te Tiriti, we acknowledge the importance of contesting world-views and the uneven power relationships that can foster inequalities in our own country, as well as across the world. Oxfam believes we need to reflect on and learn from our own ways of working through reconciliation with Māori, if we are to meaningfully support the realisation of human rights across the world.
- **A track-record in human rights and good governance**  
New Zealand has a long history of good governance, and ranks highly on global governance indicators, such as the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators and Transparency International's Perceptions of Corruption Index. Our long-term

leadership in human rights, and strong and enforceable code of law are two key reasons why New Zealand is so well-governed (Transparency International, 2017) New Zealand is also ranked second in the world for peacefulness (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2018, p. 8). Our strong record on human rights and good governance should inform New Zealand's international sustainable development cooperation efforts (as outlined above under 'foundation principles').

- **Diverse peoples**

New Zealand's diversity is a key strength that can contribute to our ICSD. Along with Māori, our Pacific communities also have much to contribute to how New Zealand undertakes work overseas, and we return to this below. Our Asian communities also have great potential to contribute, and they are growing more than any other population group in New Zealand (Stats NZ, 2017).

- **A sustainable development-oriented foreign policy**

The recently articulated Pacific diplomacy principles indicate that New Zealand recognises how intertwined our well-being, peace and prosperity are with the Pacific. This approach can be extended more broadly across all New Zealand's foreign policy work. Given the depth of globalisation, New Zealand's problems are often global problems, and global problems are often New Zealand's problems, such as climate change, antibiotic resistance, the increasing movement of people across borders, and our oceans. These issues all impact on New Zealand as much as other countries, and require collective action to address them. This is also acknowledged in New Zealand's current efforts to explore how trade can be inclusive, and promote social and environmental well-being alongside growing economies. New Zealand has an opportunity to develop a foreign policy that overtly identifies its diverse interests overseas, and ensures that the longer-term interests of a prosperous, peaceful and equitable world are prioritised throughout its foreign policy, alongside shorter-term interests of which the results are only felt within New Zealand's borders.

**Oxfam's recommends that:**

- New Zealand's kaupapa be based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and harness New Zealand's manaakitanga, smallness, human rights record and diversity to achieve a sustainable development-oriented foreign policy.
- this kaupapa be founded on human rights, the SDGs, complexity and attention to power, as outlined above under 'foundation principles'.

## What does effective international development cooperation involve?

### MFAT as a Centre of Excellence in International Sustainable Development (SDG17)

To ensure New Zealand achieves quality ICSD, Oxfam suggests that MFAT develops itself into a Centre of Excellence on international sustainable development. International sustainable development challenges were never easy, but are becoming more and more complex. It is crucial that the New Zealand government has a reservoir of expertise and specialist knowledge in international sustainable development, and can not only provide quality policy advice and deliver effective aid that achieves sustainable development outcomes, but also act as a convenor and facilitator for the wider New Zealand international sustainable development community. Below we list the key priorities to achieve this.

- **Capability for international sustainable development**

As New Zealand engages more deeply in international sustainable development efforts beyond ODA, we suggest that MFAT's workforce requires much broader and deeper expertise in international sustainable development. International sustainable development is not about replicating in another country what New Zealand does well – this simply leads to isomorphic mimicry with no actual impact for the poorest and most vulnerable. Developing countries are complex systems of their own, with markedly different institutional and cultural contexts. Effective ICSD requires staff with proven interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills, alongside international sustainable development knowledge and experience. The requirement to take a holistic perspective, integrating human rights, attention to power and climate change, necessitates specialist knowledge, as does engagement in particular sectoral areas, such as health or education. If MFAT is to lead and coordinate the New Zealand government in its international sustainable development efforts, MFAT must be a centre of excellence in sustainable, inclusive international development, and have the culture and capabilities to achieve this.

- **Convening and facilitating**

There are opportunities for MFAT to formally draw on the expertise of the broader ICSD community in New Zealand. This speaks to MFAT's potential role as a convenor and facilitator, both across the New Zealand government but also with key stakeholders in the community. To make a whole-of-government ICSD approach work, MFAT will need to develop robust coordinating mechanisms. This is necessary to ensure that the New Zealand government's international sustainable development efforts are not fragmented and do not overwhelm often small partner government professional executives, and to capture lessons learned and integrate them into future action. MFAT has convening power, and is already the site of multi-stakeholder partnerships, including with civil society organisations and the private sector. The Ministry engages in policy dialogue with various New Zealand actors, and this can be expanded upon significantly. Further, the Aid Programme can bring people together from across New Zealand, the Pacific, and beyond, to learn about our shared challenges, such as ending violence against women, or creating employment for young people in isolated areas, or reducing inequality.

- **A culture that prioritises and rewards international sustainable development**

To be a Centre of Excellence in ICSD, Oxfam recommends that MFAT ensure balance between New Zealand's varied interests overseas, particularly that New Zealand's long-term interests in a world where everyone enjoys their basic rights is as important as New Zealand's shorter-term, internal economic or security interests. The incentive structure within MFAT must give equal weighting to support staff who

work to achieve international sustainable development outcomes, alongside staff who work to achieve New Zealand's shorter-term security, political and economic outcomes. If New Zealand is serious about achieving global well-being, peace and prosperity – which are also good for our security and economic interests – then ICSD work must be prioritised and rewarded within MFAT culture.

- **Systems and structures that support locally-led responses**  
Through our decades of international development work, Oxfam knows that interventions must be context-specific and led by the people who live the issues. For MFAT, this requires careful country context system analysis. It also requires institutionalising systems and processes to ensure that it is partners in developing countries who assess their own problems and devise their own solutions. New processes such as problem-driven adaptation are most effective when led by the people who live the problem. To enable this, Oxfam would like to see MFAT expand its devolution of international development expertise to posts, and ensure decision-making is not centralised in Wellington.
- **Integration of climate change and power, including between genders**  
Climate change and power are areas that need to be integrated into all New Zealand's ICSD activities. Historically we have used the terms 'cross-cutting' and 'stand-alone', particularly in the area of human rights, the environment and gender. These have often led to either/or approaches, rather than both/and approaches. The latter is what is needed, but too often this does not occur. To avoid this, we simply argue that climate change and power analysis become a core focus in all ICSD work.
- We also believe that gender and human rights should be core, integrated foci to all ICSD activities. However, Oxfam recognises that focusing on gender equality requires more than a commitment to standalone or mainstreamed gender programming. Instead we would encourage an approach that integrates transformative feminist leadership that acknowledges "the various faces of power – visible, hidden and invisible, external and internal sources of power, as well as the various expressions of power" (Batiwala & Friedman, 2014), and seeks to transform these. These elements include multilevel analysis of social justice concerns – from the individual to the community to the societal levels – and a commitment to bringing marginalised voices to the centre of the conversation. Through integrating attention to power, issues of gender and human rights will be brought to the fore.
- This will require adequate staff resourcing, appropriate systems and procedures, and ongoing professional development for all staff, so that this analysis can be done properly, not in a tick-box fashion. Other government agencies involved in ICSD will not necessarily understand the importance of this, and will need support and professional development to ensure ICSD has impact and leaves no-one behind.
- **Policy-Relevant research**  
Finally, as a Centre of Excellence, MFAT should invest in strategic, policy-relevant research. Oxfam sees many research questions emerging from our suggestions above. There are many things we do not know about how to achieve inclusive international sustainable development outcomes. Investing in research for policy enables us to continuously improve our responses to complex problems. How can New Zealand's ICSD incorporate power and politics into its activities? What is the best way to support communities to adapt to climate change? What are the best interventions for aid in in poorly governed states? What does effective ICSD 'look' like? How can aid support and protect social capital and cultural support systems as the economy marketizes? MFAT has the opportunity to invest in policy-specific research that can assist in answering these questions and therefore support ever-improved ICSD interventions.

- **Capacity building (SDG 17) or articulating *how* New Zealand goes about ICSD**  
Capacity-building is an important aspect of SDG17, and one that both the 2015 Pacific Peer Review of the New Zealand Aid Programme, and the OECD DAC Peer Review recommended New Zealand consider more deeply. Capacity building is a contested term, with a variety of perspectives. We suggest it may be more useful for New Zealand to articulate how it goes about ICSD – an articulation that is currently absent. This could incorporate the foundation principles we outline above, and New Zealand’s kaupapa, to create a document that recognises that meaningful sustainable development outcomes are founded on human rights, and require long-term engagement based on collegiality, learning, systems-thinking, and attention to power dynamics within and between complex systems. Such a document would be a perfect companion for the new ICSD Policy Statement.

**Oxfam recommends that:**

- MFAT become a Centre of Excellence on international sustainable development that can convene and facilitate a whole-of-government and wider community New Zealand response to international sustainable development challenges.
- a Centre of Excellence requires investment in the capabilities, culture, systems and structures that support quality ICSD.
- all New Zealand’s ICSD efforts integrate climate change and power, including the power dynamics between genders.
- MFAT invest in policy-relevant research
- MFAT clearly articulates *how* it goes about achieving ICSD.

## What should New Zealand do beyond aid?

MFAT's key role as the New Zealand government's Centre of Excellence on international development, and how it can best full its role, has been outlined above. Here we focus on thematic areas that Oxfam thinks the New Zealand government can focus on in its ICSD, beyond aid. Many of these are under way already, including the Pacific Reset and 'Pacific Connections' work, migration, trade and multilateralism.

- **Pacific Reset and Pacific Connections**

MFAT needs to articulate more clearly how the new Pacific diplomacy principles will ensure a focus on ICSD. It is not completely clear how these will be operationalised, or how the principles of 'shared prosperity' and 'mutual benefit' support an ICSD agenda that sustainably addresses poverty and inequality, and leaves no-one behind.

- Oxfam is excited about the new 'Pacific Connections' team and believe it holds great potential, particularly for building relationships between New Zealand and Polynesian countries and Fiji. There is less opportunity here for connections with countries such as Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. (For example, in 2013, 807 people living in New Zealand identified as being Papua New Guinean, 603 of Solomon Islands, and 492 of Vanuatu (Stats NZ, 2013)). In building 'Pacific Connections', Oxfam suggests it is important to ensure we do not overlook the potential challenges, including the heterogeneity of the Pacific, and the tensions that may exist between diaspora communities and their compatriots at home. These require careful attention. Nevertheless, this is an area we'd like to see expand and welcome opportunities to be part of that expansion.

- **Migration**

As outlined above, both globally and across the Pacific, people are on the move. One of the reasons people move is to find work, and New Zealand's Regional Seasonal Employee scheme has been an important contributor to development in a variety of Pacific Island Country communities. New Zealand has an opportunity now to explore, research and implement reforms, both in New Zealand and in Pacific Island countries, to maximise development benefits in sending countries, with a particular focus on human rights and inequality. Alongside this, MFAT can engage with financial institutions to make sending remittances as cheap and easy as possible, including exploring the negative impact that recent anti-money laundering legislation may have had on remittances. We support New Zealand's current efforts to explore climate change induced displacement and migration, and urge the government to ensure that these are led by Pacific Island Country voices, from across society.

- **Trade**

Oxfam has worked on trade for many years, and welcomes the government's current work to build an 'inclusive' trade agenda. We believe this inclusive trade agenda can be applied to New Zealand's ICSD. The importance of trade being inclusive, supporting women's empowerment, and accounting for indigenous peoples, the environment and regional and remote communities are just as relevant for trade agreements in other countries. The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER+) offers a unique opportunity for New Zealand to implement an inclusive trade agreement that assesses a trade agreement for its impact on social and environmental outcomes. New Zealand has committed significant amounts of ODA to support PACER+. There are exciting possibilities here for New Zealand to ensure trade leads to positive results in areas such as poverty and inequality reduction, including supporting micro and small businesses, youth employment, and women's empowerment, and to use the ODA thoughtfully to expand human rights,

and contribute to positive environmental and social outcomes from PACER+. Through integrating climate change into all its ICSD, including trade, New Zealand can also explore and address climate change's impacts on trade.

- **Multilateralism: integrate Pacific sustainable development priorities**  
We suggest that New Zealand ensure that all its multilateral engagements incorporate an ICSD focus. In particular, New Zealand can use its Pacific Reset diplomacy principles to ensure that in multilateral fora New Zealand advocates on behalf of Pacific Island Countries, with guidance from Pacific leadership. This could include building on key focal areas, such as those outlined in this document.
- In particular, we suggest that **inequality reduction** become a focus for New Zealand's multilateral engagements. New Zealand has some pioneering inequality reduction approaches it can share with others, such as the Living Standards Framework and evolving measurement. New Zealand also has a solid record in reducing gender inequality, such as the recent legislation for parental leave and leave for domestic violence survivors. Inequality is also an important area of focus for New Zealand's ICSD, and New Zealand could make this a flagship area in its multilateral engagement. There is a niche here that New Zealand could fill.
- Another area New Zealand could prioritise in multilateral engagement is **oceans**. New Zealand has a solid track record in this area and it is an area where New Zealand can contribute more, particularly in the area of global governance. Oceans are a global public good – they sustain life on earth. And, as articulated above, they are central to the Pacific region and New Zealand as part of that. The only way to ensure a fair, sustainable and equitable distribution of the benefits of oceans – the blue economy – is to build a robust system of global governance that is linked to the voices of local people. New Zealand has a real opportunity to harmonise its domestic and foreign policies in the area of oceans, and grow our global engagement to ensure we protect oceans for future generations across the world.
- **Civilian engagement in peace and security**  
The new defence strategy highlights New Zealand's commitment to maintain the global rules-based order, in part through ongoing participation in global peace and security initiatives, including peacekeeping. The government's continued engagement in UN-mandated peacekeeping operations and the extension of New Zealand Defence Force deployments to support coalition missions in Afghanistan and Iraq reflects the global horizons and ambitions of New Zealand defence policy. New Zealand's ICSD policy should lead and inform New Zealand's overseas peace and security engagements. Peace and security is a civilian as much as military enterprise, with critical roles for refugee protection and resettlement, peacebuilding, security sector reform, good governance and other activities that target the root causes of conflict and support long-term recovery from conflict.
- **Remain focused on effective aid**  
New Zealand needs to acknowledge that aid will be an important part of its foreign policy for a long time to come. Given the financing gaps many Pacific Island Countries will experience over the coming decades, aid "should be viewed as an essential component of an ongoing collaboration between the PICs and development partners to fill structural financing gaps, not as a short or medium-term 'intervention'" (Edwards, 2016, p. iv). To do this well, New Zealand must not lose focus on its Aid Programme, and ensure continuous quality improvement so we can progress towards shared prosperity, and leave no-one behind.

**Oxfam recommends that:**

- key areas for New Zealand's ICSD action beyond aid include the Pacific Reset and Pacific manaakitanga, migration, trade, and multilateralism, the latter particularly in the areas of inequality and oceans.
- New Zealand's global defence commitments and strategic priorities are informed by New Zealand's ICSD policy and programming.
- New Zealand ensures it maintains an effective Aid Programme that invests in ongoing quality improvement.

## Aid Priorities for New Zealand to developing countries

New Zealand has consistently focused its aid on the Pacific, and this has been reinforced across governments for the past twenty years. Yet, New Zealand's foreign policy has always been more internationalist than this. New Zealand should not confine itself to the Pacific region, but explore and implement niche areas in other parts of the world that contribute to responding to the challenges outlined above – poverty, inequality, climate change, migration, and realising human rights for all.

- **Review aid outside of the Pacific**

New Zealand's aid outside the Pacific requires a review based on the question of whether or not these activities are contributing to sustainably expanding human rights, reducing poverty and inequality, and addressing climate change and people's movement. Over the past few years, there have been a range of activities funded in countries from Sri Lanka to Colombia to Uruguay to Comoros to Ethiopia. These have often been focused on dairy and geothermal energy. We question whether these are the key areas New Zealand can have the greatest international sustainable development impact. They may be, but it is not evident that New Zealand's investments in these areas lead to sustainable development outcomes. New Zealand's aid activities outside the Pacific need to be comprehensively reviewed.

- **Adaptive sustainable livelihoods: agriculture and fisheries (SDG 8, 14-15)**

As outlined above, many Pacific Island Countries depend on the land and the sea to survive and gain an income. Climate change will threaten this. This is a common experience with many developing countries across the world. New Zealand has some experience in this area, including in South-East Asia, and can continue to build this as a core focus area for its aid to all countries, and develop expertise in supporting *adaptive* sustainable livelihoods that are resilient to climate change.

- **Policy dialogue: human rights, poverty, inequality, climate change (SDG 1, 2, 10, 13)**

Oxfam suggest that New Zealand explores options for using aid to support policy dialogue and shared learning between countries. We suggest New Zealand can bring value in policy dialogue in the areas of human rights and democracy, poverty and inequality reduction – including for women and girls – and how to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This could include discussion of specific policy interventions to move strugglers away from vulnerability to income levels where they are less likely to fall back into poverty. New Zealand can share its work at home, such as our systems of good governance, the Living Standards Framework and well-being budget, and recent legislation changes that progress labour rights and women's rights. Similarly, New Zealand's Zero Carbon Bill and activities in its ICSD that focus on climate change adaptation will provide useful ideas for other countries to consider.

- **Conflict-sensitive approaches and focus on peacebuilding (SDG 16)**

Effective aid in fragile and conflict affected countries must be conflict-sensitive, and New Zealand should include focused peacebuilding programming to support sustainable peace and address the root causes of conflict, consistent with our international commitments made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS).

### Oxfam recommends:

- that New Zealand review its aid beyond the Pacific, build its focus on adaptive sustainable livelihoods, and use aid to support policy dialogue and shared learning on human rights, reducing poverty and inequality, climate change adaptation, and develop a peacebuilding programme.

## Aid priorities in the Pacific

Overall, New Zealand can focus its aid in the Pacific on addressing hardship and inequality, building good governance, nurturing young people, protecting the ocean and expanding the blue economy, and ensuring that the predominantly rural and subsistence life of the majority of Pacific people supports raising living standards.

- **Policy dialogue to reduce poverty and inequality (SDGs 1, 2, 10)**  
Oxfam recommends that New Zealand's Aid Programme supports Pacific Island Countries to prevent and reduce inequality. Oxfam has identified three core policy areas that support the reduction of inequality: social spending (health, education and social protection), progressive taxation and labour rights. The latter is important in the Pacific, but given the large numbers of people in the informal economy, there is a need to ensure the rights of these people are expanded and protected through more general legislation. Focused attention in these areas also assists those who are poor and suffering hardship. We would like to see the Aid Programme invest more significantly in supporting Pacific Island Country governments to grow progressive public policy in these areas, to prevent and reduce inequality.
- **Policies for migration, rural services and urbanisation (SDG 1-16)**  
Climate change may exacerbate the already ongoing movement of people from rural to urban areas. New Zealand's aid should assist Pacific Island Country governments to ensure that both rural and urban areas receive adequate investment, and that urbanisation is well-planned and managed to avoid the worst aspects of urban overcrowding. While a sensitive issue, land tenure is an important one to address as people move. There may be opportunities here to support Maori rŭnanga to share their experience regarding approaches to collective land tenure.
- **Good governance: civil society action and conflict sensitivity (SDG 1-16)**  
A focus on good governance is crucial, and of particular pertinence in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Nauru. There may be little that aid can do to improve clientelist governance systems. Yet, MFAT can continue to invest in the areas outlined above, to ensure human development does not deteriorate, while providing space for local actors to change political systems from within. Because poor governance is a root cause of conflict, it is important that governance activities, in particular, are conflict sensitive.
- Oxfam would like to see greater New Zealand aid to support civil society, which is a key part of good governance, but which is weak in several Pacific Island Countries – particularly those with the most severe governance challenges. Oxfam suggests that New Zealand Aid Programme could invest in pioneering activities that expand citizen engagement and action. There are many great examples from Oxfam's work that we would be pleased to share with you. This investment should not be confined to the new Partnerships Fund, but expanded across the Aid Programme to enable strategic investment in civil society as a key mechanism for good governance. Stronger citizen action to hold governments to account is a crucial part of building better governance.
- **Gender equality (SDG 5)**  
Women's and girls' empowerment and equality must be a focus of New Zealand's ICSD. This requires attending to power dynamics, as outlined above, but with a specific focus on the power dynamics inherent in gender relations. It also involves multi-level action and analysis, from the individual to the structural level. For example, women and girls need their routine needs met, such as having safe toilets at markets, as well as action to alter the norms and rules that perpetuate their discrimination. Yet, it is not enough to simply pass legislation: it needs to be

implemented. Laws in place in several Pacific Island Countries that prohibit violence against women are only as useful as they are properly implemented by state institutions. As recommended above, attention to gendered power dynamics need to be integrated across all programming. Oxfam also recommends that specific programming focus on young women.

- **Youth participation and leadership, particularly young women (SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8)**  
The large numbers of young people in most Pacific Island Countries requires a clear focus on their aspirations and needs as active citizens, including in areas such as active citizenship, and meaningful education and employment. Young people need to be supported to actively lead the solutions to the challenges they identify in their lives. Urban and rural youth will require different approaches, highlighting the importance of youth leadership, and approaches that are relevant to the particular context. Young women's empowerment should be a specific focus for New Zealand's aid, ensuring this is based on attention to gender power dynamics.
- **Oceans and the blue economy (SDGs 14, 16)**  
As stated above, the Pacific Ocean is of great value to all Pacific Island Countries. New Zealand can support Pacific Island Country governments and communities to ensure good governance of this wealth, and that economic gains are channelled into reducing poverty and inequality. There is a need to ensure that the voices of Pacific men, women and key marginalised groups are heard in these policy spaces.
- **Adaptive sustainable livelihoods, agriculture, coastal fisheries (SDG 8, 14-15)**  
Given the majority of people live in rural areas in most Pacific Island Countries, New Zealand's aid needs to focus more heavily on ensuring people can continue to feed themselves and produce surpluses for sale to grow their income. Given the impact of climate change, significant investment may be necessary, particularly to support community-led approaches. People will need significant support to adapt to climate change and survive, as well as to increase their productivity and gain greater access to markets so they can thrive.
- New Zealand could support communities and governments to expand high-value, low-volume niche exports, such as 'single source' products (coffee, chocolate and spices), virgin coconut oil, cosmetics, indigenous nuts and oils, fresh fruit and vegetables, livestock, cut flowers, organic produce and timbers. There are great opportunities here for niche markets and employment generation, while protecting and building on the strengths of traditional systems. But this will require a holistic approach to community economic development, and targeted support to Pacific Island Country governments to invest in the necessary infrastructure, such as roads, ports, pathways and telecommunications. These, too, need to be climate proofed.

**Oxfam recommends that in the Pacific, aid supports:**

- policies to reduce inequality and poverty
- policies for migration, rural services and urbanisation
- good governance, with a particular focus on civil society
- youth participation and leadership, and young women's empowerment
- oceans and the blue economy
- adaptive sustainable livelihoods, agriculture and fisheries, including expansion of niche products to reduce rural poverty and inequality.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> In our work across the world Oxfam sees far too many people still enduring extreme poverty, at least half of whom are children (The World Bank Group, 2018) (United Nations Development Programme, 2012, p. 29). The “vast majority of the global poor live in rural areas and are poorly educated, mostly employed in the agricultural sector, and over half are under 18 years of age”, and half in Sub-Saharan Africa (The World Bank Group, 2018). It is also important to remember that even once people have moved above the US\$1.90 a day poverty line, they still remain poor by any stretch of the imagination. Nancy Birdsall of the Global Development Centre calls these people the ‘strugglers’, and they comprise 60 percent of people living in developing countries today (Birdsall, 2018). These people live above the absolute poverty line but have not yet achieved a daily household income per capita of at least US\$10 (Birdsall, 2018). The likelihood that these people will fall back into poverty is high – they are only a health crisis, job loss or natural disaster away from extreme poverty. The ‘strugglers’ are net payers to the tax system and receive little in return (Birdsall, 2018). They are likely to have a primary education, and are most likely informal workers in peri-urban and urban areas.

<sup>2</sup> Despite decreasing global inequality since the early 1990s, still global inequality is wider today than it was in the 1820s, and remains too high in many countries across the world (as measure by the Gini) (The World Bank Group, 2016, p. 69). Within countries there has been an “increasing trend towards income inequality” (United Nations Development Programme, 2012, p. 31). “The share of income going to the top 1 percent is known to have increased in many countries on which information is available” (The World Bank Group, 2016, p. 69). Inequality is about far more than income levels. It is about the denial of basic rights and discrimination. Inequality is bad for everyone, linked with insecurity, crime, poor health and lower economic growth (Oxfam International & Development Finance Institute, 2017, p. 4).

<sup>3</sup> Human populations continue to grow and change. By 2050 it is projected there will be 9.8 billion people on earth (UN DESA Population Division, 2017). Changing population dynamics will see aging populations alongside a youth bulge, with a growing middle class and increasing movement of people (United Nations Development Programme, 2016, p. 32). The number of people forcibly displaced sits at 68.5 million people, 40 million of whom are displaced within their own country (UNHCR, 2017, p. 2). Developing countries continue to host the vast majority of refugees, at 85 percent (UNHCR, 2017, p. 15).

<sup>4</sup> Fiji, Samoa and Tonga have had greater economic growth over the past decades, and joined with Kiribati and Tuvalu have the greatest future potential to boost their government revenue in areas such as tourism, fisheries and labour mobility (Edwards, 2016). The governance issues in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are significant constraints on development, and these countries face future financial constraints for spending on human development (Edwards, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> With the exception of Vanuatu, over 20 percent of people in all Pacific Island Countries are unable to meet their total basic needs (food and non-food), meaning they live in hardship, with 40 percent of Papua New Guinea’s people living in hardship. For those who live above the poverty line, they remain highly vulnerable to potentially falling below it (The World Bank Group, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Discrimination and inequality in all its forms exist in various Pacific Island Countries, particularly in Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Solomon Islands (The World Bank Group, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> While the proportion of older persons in the population is increasing (Anderson & Irava, 2017), those aged under 25 years comprise more than half of the population across the Pacific (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2015). The average youth unemployment rate is 23 percent, compared with a global average of 12.6 percent (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2015). Despite a global downwards trend, unplanned teenage pregnancies for girls aged 15 to 19 years in ten Pacific Island Countries have begun to trend upwards (UNFPA unpublished, 2018).