



Helen Clark shares insights on Pacific development challenges

Side event on the margins of the first regular session of the Executive Board

Monday, 25 February 2019, 13:30 – 14:45

Peace Garden and Auditorium, WFP headquarters

Lunch will be served in the Peace Garden from 13:30 – 13:45

You are kindly invited to attend a side event with special guest speaker:
The Rt Hon Helen Clark, ONZ.

Context

The Pacific Ocean covers a third of the globe. It is a region of unique and significant development challenges. New Zealand and Australia, long-term regional members and partners, are pleased to contribute to WFP Board members' deepened understanding of the Pacific by offering this opportunity to hear from a globally recognized political and development leader, The Rt Hon Helen Clark.

The 'Large Ocean Small Island States' of the Pacific face unique development challenges. Extreme geographic isolation – even within individual countries – and often small population size can create barriers to service delivery and economic development.

Not only are they at high risk of natural disasters including cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and droughts, low-lying Pacific islands and atolls are on the front lines of climate change. Rising seas, severe storms and changing weather patterns increasingly affect communities traditionally reliant on fishing and subsistence farming.

According to the 2017 World Bank Report "climate change poses a major and even existential threat to the Pacific Island Countries. The economic costs of natural disasters are already high for most PICs - on average between 0.5 to 6.6 percent of GDP is lost annually – and climate change will increase vulnerabilities".

Objectives

The Rt Hon Helen Clark, ONZ, will share personal insights into the unique development challenges faced by the Pacific, drawing on decades of regional and global experience, both as Prime Minister of New Zealand (1999–2008) and as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and Chair of the United Nations Development Group (2009–2017).

Her comments will provide useful perspective on the context and needs of the Pacific region in advance of consultations on WFP's Pacific interim multi-country strategic plan, scheduled for consideration by the Executive Board in June.

Agenda

The side-event is hosted by New Zealand and Australia. Following introductions and an address by The Rt Hon Helen Clark, there will be an opportunity for dialogue and questions.

13:25 - Welcome by New Zealand and Australia and introduction of Pacific representatives

13:30 - Buffet lunch in the Peace Garden

13:45 - Move to WFP main Auditorium

13:55 - Introduction and opening remarks

14:00 - Address by The Rt Hon Helen Clark, ONZ

14:20 - Q&A

14:45 - Event concludes