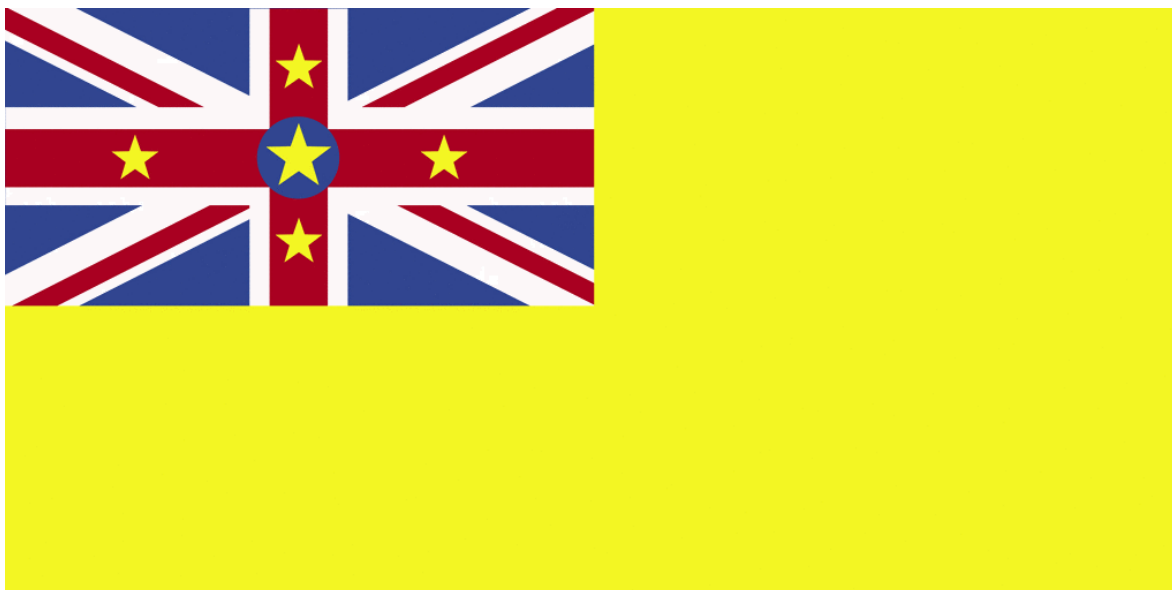


Niue CCA

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Photo credit: AFP, Michael Runkel

Common Country Assessments (CCAs) have been developed within the framework of the 2030 Agenda with a focus on key development risks and transformational opportunities. Starting with a country context analysis, with a macroeconomic focus, zooming in on specific sectors, gathering evidence from UN agencies, Government and Development Partner official documents and a variety of primary and secondary data sources, the CCA provides an SDG progress assessment with a view of key indicators at risk, a financial and partnership landscape and a multidimensional vulnerability analysis. The CCA concludes with the identification of the most likely and damaging risks to the development process, and the discussion of key development challenges and opportunities that stand to have the most catalytic impact in the achievement of the SDGs in the country. This CCA is to be read in conjunction with the regional analysis of the state of sustainable development in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories supported by the United Nations. The CCA is a living document that will be refreshed annually to reflect evolving trends and integrate new data. Subsequent iterations of the CCA will dig deeper into sociological and anthropological connections to the risks and challenges identified and explore further the pathways for green and inclusive growth in the Pacific.

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADO	Asian Development Outlook
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DBS	Direct Budget Support
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EQAP	Educational Quality and Assessment Programme
FMS	Fiji Meteorological Service
FY	Fiscal Year
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPV	Human Papillomavirus
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IGME	UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOC-UNESCO	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
JNAP	Joint National Action Plan
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
NCD	Non-communicable Disease
NHPC	Niue Household and Population Census
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NiSERM	Niue Sustainable Energy Road Map
NMHS	National Meteorological and Hydrological Services
NSO	Niue Statistics Office
NTD	Neglected Tropical Disease

NZ\$	New Zealand Dollar
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCV	Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine
PEER	Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews
PICS	Pacific Islands Climate Services
PICTs	Pacific Islands Countries and Territories
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PMC	Pacific Meteorological Council
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PTWC	Pacific Tsunami Warning Center
PTWS	Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System
RCC	(Pacific) Regional Climate Centre
RNZ	Radio New Zealand
RSMC	Regional Specialized Meteorological Center
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEIA	Socio-Economic Impact Assessment
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMA	Special Management Area
SNO	Statistics Niue Office
SPC	Pacific Community
SPTO	Pacific Tourism Organization
SST	Sea Surface Temperature
STI	Sexually-transmitted Infections
SWFP	Severe Weather Forecast Programme
TCP	Tropical Cyclone Programme
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNPS	United Nations Pacific Strategy
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office
UPEI	University of Prince Edward Island
US	United States
US\$	United States Dollar
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

Country Profile



Niue is a self-governing island country in the South Pacific Ocean with a land area of nearly 260 square kilometers and a coastline of 64 km. It is a single island located in a triangle between Samoa, Tonga, and Cook Islands. It is one of the world's largest coral islands, with steep limestone cliffs running along the coasts, and a central plateau inland. The island has a tropical climate, with rainfall occurring mostly between April and November. It has 71% of forest cover and 19% of agricultural land, cultivated for subsistence with the traditional slash and burn practice. 47% of the population lives in urban areas - mostly Alofi, the capital, in addition to which there are 14 villages on the island.

Niue is believed to have been inhabited for over a thousand years. Oral tradition and legends speak of the first settlement by

Huanaki and Fao, together with the Fire Gods from Fonuagalo, the Hidden Land. Polynesians from Samoa settled Niue around 900 AD. Further settlers arrived from Tonga in the 16th century. A succession of patu-iki (kings) ruled, beginning with Puni-mata. Tui-toga, who reigned from 1875 to 1887, was the first Christian king. The first Europeans to sight Niue sailed under Captain James Cook in 1774. Cook made three attempts to land, but the inhabitants refused to grant permission to do so. Whaling vessels were some of the most regular visitors to the island in the nineteenth century. The London Missionary Society has taught Christianity on-island since mid-19th Century. Over 60% of today's population are parishioners of Ekalesia Niue, the Congregational Christian Church of the island, a Protestant church founded by missionaries from said London Missionary Society.

In 1889 the Chiefs and rulers of Niue, in a letter to Queen Victoria, asked her to establish a British Protectorate or to annex the island to the British Empire. A British Protectorate was declared, then Niue was brought within the boundaries of New Zealand in June 1901 by the same Order and Proclamation as the Cook Islands. Niue became a self-governing territory in free association with New Zealand in 1974. Niue is fully responsible for internal affairs; New Zealand retains responsibility for external affairs and defense; however, these responsibilities confer no rights of control and are only exercised at the request of the Government of Niue.

The small population of Niue increased marginally - and for the first time in the last 20 years - to reach 1,719 in 2017. Due to the high level of emigration, Niue's population in 2017 was one third of its peak of 5,200 in 1966 and 42% of its level in the early 1970s. Close to 23,900

people of Niuean ancestry – with more than 20% Niue-born – were living in New Zealand in 2013. Ageing is another fact of the Niuean population dynamics, as the proportion of elderly persons continues to rise.¹

Niue’s GDP is split in 50% services, 27% agriculture and 23% industry. Revenues are around US\$15M and public budget around US\$16M. The island has a paved runway airport, 210 km of paved roadways, one major seaport and 91% of internet subscribers. As of November 2021, Niue remains completely free of COVID-19, with no confirmed cases reported. With Pfizer COVID vaccines supplied by New Zealand, Niue had vaccinated 97% of the eligible population (74.5% of the total population) by the end of July 9, 2021.²

Key Statistics for Niue

Population & Demographics	Value	Year
Total population ³	1,719	2017
Children Population, 0-17	495 (32%)	2021
Life expectancy at birth (years)	76.0	2017
Population growth rate (%)	-0.83	2021
Disability Prevalence ⁴	4.7%	2019
Poverty & Inequality		
Median household expenditure, NZ\$/US\$	31,550/22,208	2016
Median household expenditure per capita, NZ\$ ⁵ /US\$	10,120/7,123	2016
Economy		
Real GDP growth (%) ⁶	6.5	2019
Inflation (% per year)	2.7	2020

¹ United Nations Population Fund (UNDP). 2014. Population and Development Profiles: Pacific Island Countries.

² Radio New Zealand (RNZ). July 2021. “Niue Achieves Herd Immunity for Covid-19” <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/pacific/446925/niue-achieves-herd-immunity-for-covid-19>. Also see University of Oxford. Oxford Martin School. Global Change Data Lab. Our World in Data (accessed November 2021). <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/niue>.

³ Statistics Niue Office (SNO). 2017. Niue Household and Population Census (NHPC) 2017. Accessed August 2021.

⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). 2019. Disability at a Glance. Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific — Strategic Approaches to Achieving Disability-inclusive Sustainable Development.

⁵ Statistics Niue Office (SNO). 2018. Niue - Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2015-2016. Report.

⁶ Asian Development Bank (ADB). April 2021. Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2021: Financing a Green and Inclusive Recovery. Pp. 372 & 377.

1. Country Overview

Governance

Niue's association with New Zealand confers Niueans New Zealand citizenship by birth, descent, or grant under New Zealand citizenship law. Niue is one of the United Nations Small Island Developing States (SIDS), a distinct group of UN member and non-member States and territories that face unique social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities. Niue is a parliamentary democracy ruled by the 1974 Constitution. Constitutional amendment requires at least two-thirds majority vote of the Assembly and approval by at least two-thirds majority votes in a referendum if affecting Niue's self-governing status, British nationality and New Zealand citizenship, external affairs and defense, economic and administrative assistance by New Zealand, and amendment procedures. In early 2021, the Constitution Review Committee of the Assembly requested suggestions from the public about changes to the Constitution.

Niue's legal system follows the English common law. The Governor General represents the Head of State, Cabinet members are chosen by the Premier and the Premier is indirectly elected by the Legislative Assembly for a 3-year term. The Legislature is a unicameral Assembly or Fono Ekepule where 20 Members sit; 14 Members are directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote and 6 are directly elected from the National Register or "common roll" by majority vote. Members serve 3-year terms. All are independent candidates, not ascribed to any political party. The Niue Chief Justice is appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Cabinet.

Economy

Niue is a small economy, with an estimated 2019 GDP of NZ\$45.2M (US\$31.7M). Given the population of 1,700⁷ this translates into NZ\$26,600 (US\$19,000) per capita, for which Niue is a high-income country (HIC) that nevertheless enjoys IBRD lending status. As a member of ADB since March 2019, Niue is also eligible for IBRD-equivalent financing terms. Before the pandemic, the country was enjoying solid economic growth, with GDP expansion by 6.5% in 2019.

⁷ HIES Report, Op. Cit.

Climate

Niue has a tropical climate, modified by southeast trade winds. The country is exposed and vulnerable to tropical cyclones (TC) between January and March. The high incidence and severity of climate-related disasters has been disruptive to the development trajectory of the country, causing widespread damage to infrastructure and natural resources. For instance, the damage to indigenous forests and mahogany plantations from TC Heta in January 2004 cost the country an estimated NZ\$52M (in 2004 prices, or US\$36.4M) in potential income.⁸ Risks associated with cyclones are seen as the reason for the diminished investment in agriculture in the already limited fertile land available. Climate change remains a major threat affecting ocean resources through ocean temperature increase, acidification and its impact on coral reefs. The country depends on ocean resources for food.

Population Dynamics

The small population size (one of the smallest in the Pacific)⁹ helps mitigate environmental impacts, making it easier for the ecosystems to cope with population demands. The country has made significant commitments to the protection of marine resources, with a focus on ensuring improved management of offshore and inshore fisheries stocks and supporting a growing marine-based tourism industry. The limited economic and educational (especially high education) opportunities on-island and the large community of Niueans living abroad explain the high level of emigration, especially among those aged 15-24, primarily to New Zealand, but also to Australia and other Pacific Island States. Emigration among the youth coupled with the increase in life expectancy has aged the demographics in Niue. Old dependency ratio went up from 28.8 to 35.2 people aged 60 or older per 100 people aged 15-59, between 2011 and 2017. Total dependency ratio, which includes dependents younger than 15, went up from 75 to 88 in the same period.

The lack of employment opportunities is not the only reason why Niueans are emigrating. Among those who reported planning to leave Niue in the following 12 months after the 2017 Census Survey¹⁰, 43.2% cited family and friends, 33.3% cited education, 28.3% cited employment, and 24.6% cited lifestyle as reasons for leaving the country. The same share of women and men mentioned family and friends as the main reason for leaving. Women were three times as likely to note education than employment as a reason for leaving. Men, on the other hand, were almost twice as likely to report employment than education as a reason for leaving. Niueans' eligibility to access New Zealand's superannuation pension is another reason affecting migration patterns. Among the criteria for eligibility is having lived in New Zealand for at least 10 years since turning age 20.¹¹

⁸ University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI). 2007. Jurisdiction Niue. Institute of Island Studies. <https://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/islandstudies.ca/files/jurisdiction/Niue.html>

⁹ Tokelau has a similar population of about 1,600 people.

¹⁰ NSPC, Op. Cit.

¹¹ New Zealand Government. Work and Income. NZ Super or Veteran's Pension for Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau Residents. Ministry of Social Development. Accessed November 2021.

Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism and Trade

The tourism sector has been the backbone of the economy in pre-COVID times. Pre-Covid, Niue received about 10,500 tourists per year, or about 6 tourists per each citizen (one of the highest ratios in the Pacific region), which translated in a tourism revenue of about NZ\$12M (US\$8.4M), 27% of the country's GDP. The COVID-19 crisis impacted negatively on the progress of gender equality in Niue, with a visible impact on women's employment in an economy where 32% of jobs come from tourism and other related subsectors.¹² It is estimated that, mainly due to the loss of tourism and the reduction in the export of some traditional local products, the country's GDP in FY 2021 (April 2020 to March 2021) has contracted by as much as 21%.¹³

While tourism has been an important sector in the country's GDP, Niue remains highly dependent on official grants received mainly from New Zealand to finance its government budget and trade gaps, guaranteeing public services in and food imports into the country. Food and animal product imports accounted for 30% of total merchandise imports in 2020. Even before the pandemic, merchandise imports into the country were 10 times the country's merchandise exports some years. Merchandise trade deficit has been compensated by a net trade surplus in services, including receipts from tourism, and by a net inflow of income into the country, mainly of official grants. In 2018 for instance, merchandise trade balance reached a deficit of 41.4% of GDP, while services balance presented a surplus of 21% of GDP (with travel credit at 42% of GDP; and travel and transport services debit at 21% of GDP). Most of Niue's exports are shipped to Indonesia, while imports come from New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Japan. Niue has ratified and is a Party to the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus since its entry into force on 13 December 2020.

The pandemic had a significant impact on merchandise balance according to recent statistics. In 2020, the value of merchandise exports accounted for 5% of merchandise imports, compared to 12% in 2019 and 10% in 2018. Available statistics do not allow for a full picture of the current balance of payment, but the country's ability to pay for food imports and other essentials is affected by the drop in tourism receipts resulting from the ongoing border closures. The number of visitors into Niue dropped by 83% between 2019 and 2020.¹⁴

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/seniors/superannuation/cook-islands-niue-and-tokelau-portability.html#null>.

¹² New Zealand Government. May 2020. [Pacific Tourism: COVID-19 Impact and recovery](#). FORWARD Insight and Strategy. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO).

¹³ New Zealand Government. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) macroeconomic estimates.

¹⁴ Government of Niue. April 2021. Snapshot Report of the Niue National Economy Year Ending January 2021. Media Release. Department of Finance and Planning.

Remittances and Deficit

In contrast to many other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Niue does not rely on remittances for external financing. The balance of payments statistics shows Niue's net flows of personal transfers as negative between 2010 and 2018. The Census 2017 further indicates that regular salaries associated with the public sector (and therefore international assistance from New Zealand) and pensions were the main sources of income for the 489 households in the sample: 75% of households mentioned salary, and another 43% mentioned pension as sources of income. Only 3.7% of all the households cited remittances as a source of income; however, among households with seven or more people, 11.9% mentioned receiving income from remittances, indicating the importance of this income source for larger households.

Since September 2020, the Government's fiscal balance has deteriorated significantly, and the fiscal deficit is expected to reach close to 9.2% of GDP at the end of the Fiscal Year 2021/2022. A deteriorating fiscal stance could have implications for salary payments, which, as mentioned, is a source of income for 75% of the country's households. A prolonged COVID crisis would further increase the vulnerability in Niue's external and internal positions. It would also significantly decrease the country's ability not only to navigate through the current crisis, but also to finance its development strategy moving forward. While Niue is looking to diversify its economy away from the tourism sector, for instance by making use of the connection to the Manatua submarine cable, the Government is also "looking at institutional reforms, constitution and legislative review, including strengthening financial systems for resilience."¹⁵

¹⁵ Ibid.

2. Progress towards the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

There are serious gaps in the availability of disaggregated census and other statistical data. As a result, it is difficult to gain and offer a complete picture of the level of sustainable development achieved by the country. This assessment is based on reliable data even if some of the statistical information is dated.



Niue has achieved universal access to clean water, universal access to education and has the lowest rates of infant and maternal mortality in the region. There is universal access to sanitation, and no cases of extreme poverty have been recorded. Health and education services are well-funded, and gender parity has been achieved in primary and secondary education. Niue is one of the PICTs to have social protection benefits specifically targeting children. The fact that all people live on a single island of 260 sq. km enforces strong communal culture and facilitates the delivery of services. Niue was one of two Pacific countries to meet all MDGs.¹⁶



Niue has a well-resourced and capable national health system, achieving many SDG targets related to child and maternal health. Niue's National Strategic Plan 2016–2026 aims to foster good health through healthy lifestyle choices with well supported health services, and food and nutrition security that is sufficient, safe, affordable and accessible. Universal health coverage is the vision of the Niue Health Strategic Plan 2011-2012.¹⁷ As New Zealand citizens, Niueans have access to free medical care in New Zealand. In Niue, medical services are provided free of charge to persons with permanent residence. The hospital provides preventative health services, dentistry, school health services and village outreach services.¹⁸ Niue has a high coverage for all recommended vaccines.

The country has achieved the SDG target for neonatal and under-five mortality. Neonatal mortality is estimated at 12 per 1,000 live births, while under-five mortality is 23 per 1,000 live births.¹⁹ Niue has also achieved the SDG for maternal mortality with zero deaths per 100,000.²⁰ There is a high antenatal services coverage (estimated at 100%), and all deliveries are attended by a skilled midwife.

¹⁶ United Nations in the Pacific. 2017. United Nations Pacific Strategy (UNPS) 2018-2022. A Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework in the Pacific Region.

¹⁷ The Plan focuses on reproductive health, Sexually-transmitted Infections (STIs) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), maternal and child health, cervical cancer and immunization.

¹⁸ Pacific Community (SPC) and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). 2016. Human Rights in the Pacific: A Situation Analysis. Pp.85-6.

¹⁹ UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (IGME). 2019. <https://childmortality.org/>

²⁰ Pacific Community (SPC). 2017. Indicator Tables.

There is no information about stunting, wasting or infant and young child feeding practices in Niue. However, the prevalence of anemia among children 6-59 months is estimated to be at 36.3%, and the prevalence of anemia among women of reproductive age is at 27.3%. Most child deaths are due to congenital disorders, pneumonia, prematurity, and injury. There is no data available on the proportion of infants with low birth weight. Adolescent mortality is estimated at 6.32 per 1,000.²¹

Niue's total fertility rate is estimated at 2.6²², while adolescent fertility is at 22 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19, the lowest ratio in the PICTs. At 22.6%, Niue's contraceptive prevalence rate is low compared to other PICTs. To achieve SDG target 3.7 "Universal access to sexual and reproductive health", the Niue Health Strategic Plan 2011-2021 proposed the development of a Niue Reproductive Health Strategy to promote a range of initiatives aimed at ensuring sustained access to effective reproductive health services and commodities (e.g. oral and injectable contraceptives) and maternal and child health services, the prevention of the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, effective family planning and the promotion of women's health more broadly.²³

Obesity and overweight, as well as related illnesses such as non-communicable diseases (NCDs), are pressing health issues. The prevalence of overweight among 10-19 years old is estimated at 58%. Overweight among adult women is estimated to be 81.8%.²⁴ 50% adult obesity (2016) situates Niue as the 6th country in the world affected by this prevalence. Niue has adopted policies to restrict trans-fat in the food supply and the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children. Niue also monitors adolescent NCD risk prevalence data.

Niue continues to address the efficiency of its medicines and commodity supply chain as part of health service delivery. The country generally procures all childhood vaccines through UNICEF's Vaccine Independence Initiative, including the newly introduced vaccines of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV), Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Rotavirus.



Education in Niue is free and compulsory from ages 5 to 16, and the country has achieved near universal enrollment. Early Childhood Education (ECE) is free but not compulsory and includes two levels - for children between the ages of 1 and 3 and children between the ages of 4 and 5. Net enrolment across both levels was 65% in 2019, although this ratio rises to 81% in the year prior to primary education. In 2019, gross enrollment in

²¹ IGME, Op. Cit. 2019.

²² Data from UN Statistics Division show a 2.2 rate for 2006-2011.

<https://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx/Images/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Niue>

Niue Vital Statistics Report: 1987 – 2011 Data from Niue Statistics Unit, Department of Treasury, shows a 2.8 rate for 2007-2011.

²³ Human Rights in the Pacific. Op. Cit. Pp. 85-86.

²⁴ World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Health Observatory (GHO). 2016

primary school was 136%, and net enrollment was 94%. In the same year, gross enrollment at secondary level was 110%, with a net enrolment figure of 91% at upper secondary level.²⁵

There are four formal education institutions in Niue: Early Childhood Education, Niue Primary School, Niue High School and the University of South Pacific – Niue branch.²⁶ One of Niue National Strategic Plan’s development pillars is social services, which aim at providing “quality, nurturing education services for happy, healthy and vibrant children.”

Based on the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) administered in 2018, 62% of primary students achieved at or above expected levels of literacy, and 67% at or above expected levels of numeracy.²⁷ There are no significant gender disparities in access to either primary or secondary education. However, girls outperform boys at primary and secondary level in terms of achievement.²⁸ According to the 2017 Census, among men aged 25-39, trade qualification was the most prominent form of qualification; among women in the same age group, a bachelor’s degree was the most common highest form of qualification.

An Inclusive Education policy supports integrated access and participation for students with a disability including the use of teacher aides.²⁹ While children with disabilities are financially supported by the Department of Community Affairs under the National Disability Policy adopted in 2011, assistance through teachers at schools has not always been ensured due to teacher shortages.³⁰

Teachers are required to have both the relevant academic qualification and the formal teacher training. In 2019, 100% of teachers in primary and secondary level were academically qualified, with 92% of primary teachers and 100% of secondary teachers having an additional teacher-specialization training.³¹ This constitutes the best performance among the Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

Data on education completion, outcomes, tertiary education, and adult education would be needed to better inform strategies to enhance quality and relevance of education and to ensure multiple learning pathways for lifelong learning.

²⁵ Pacific Community (SPC). 2021. The status of Pacific Education. A sector analysis based on internationally comparable statistics. Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP). Pp. 19-20.

²³ NSO. Education Statistics. Accessed November 2021.

²⁷ Pacific Education, Op. Cit. Pp. 21-22.

²⁸ SPC. 2021. SDG 4 Dashboard. Pacific Data Hub.

²⁹ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). 2021. Inclusive Education Country Profile: Niue.

<https://data.unicef.org/country/niu/>

³⁰ United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO). 2021. Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER). <https://education-profiles.org/oceania/niue/~niue>

³¹ Pacific Education, Op. Cit. Pp. 27-28.



As elsewhere in the South Pacific, many of the cultural norms of Niue discriminate against women. Although specific data are limited, gender inequalities manifest themselves in the male/female employment ratios, the low participation of women in governance, and the prevalence of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the community response to violence tends to be managed within the village or extended family network, and pursuit of retribution for perpetrators is often discouraged.

While no time-use surveys have been undertaken for Niue, anecdotal reports highlight that in the majority of families, women spend more time than men caring for children, the sick and the elderly, and that they also spend more hours cooking and cleaning. Women have less free time to enjoy leisure activities, engage in community and national decision-making processes, or to look after their own health.³²

In the 2017 Niue Assembly election, 10 out of 23 candidates were women, of which five were elected, comprising 25% of the Assembly.³³ At that time it was the highest ratio of women achieved by any PICT Parliament. However, in the most recent 2020 elections the number of elected women dropped to 3 (or 15% of the total), with only one woman in the Cabinet. Women are also reported to be under-represented at senior management levels in the public service.



In 2020, 97% of the population had access to basic water services, and 96% had access to basic sanitation.³⁴ Very little data is available regarding hygiene (i.e., availability of hand washing facilities with water and soap). 100% of schools have access to basic drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).³⁵ Currently there is no publicly available data on the status of WASH in healthcare facilities.³⁶

The 2012 Niue Water Act³⁷ established a foundation of water laws, specified by water regulations in 2017, to ensure governance of borehole construction, abstraction licensing and

³² Australian Aid. Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development. <https://pacificwomen.org/>

³³ The Niue Assembly (Niue Fono Ekepule) is a unicameral parliamentary body with 20 seats. Elections are held every 3 years.

³⁴ WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Niue Assembly. July 2012. Water Act 2021, N° 317. <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/niu136949.pdf>

regulations around pollution.³⁸ In 2020 the Wellhead protection regulations have further enhanced protection of drinking water resources with comprehensive provisions.³⁹



There has been an enhanced focus on energy efficiency and increasing the share of renewable energy in the national energy basket through the implementation of the Accelerating Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Applications Project since 2019. The project aims to enable the achievement of low carbon energy access, sustainable energy and green growth targets as stated in Niue's Sustainable Energy Road Map (NiSERM). The NiSERM is the basis of the country's latest National Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement, and forms part of the government's plan to move away from fossil fuels and reach the target of producing 80% of its electricity from renewable energy sources by 2025.⁴⁰



In 2017, close to 46% of Niueans, or 789 people made up the country's labor force. This represented 69% of the working age population (people aged 15 or older). While there are more women (52.4%) than men (47.6%) among the working age population, labor force participation is lower among women (60.1%) than among men (77.4%). This gap in labor force participation is particularly pronounced among young people aged 15-24.⁴¹ Among those that were not in the labor force and were not retired in 2017, 59% cited "home duties" as the main reason for not being in the labor force, followed by "education" (36%). Women mentioned "home duties" as the main reason for not being in the labor force (65.6%), followed by "education/studies" (52%).

The gender disparities also extend to those participating in the labor force. Around 58% of women and 56% of men in the labor force are in paid employment within the public sector. The private sector's share in the total employment is 27% of women and 30.4% of men. In terms of total employment, the private sector employs 20% more men than women. Education does not seem to explain these gender gaps as it appears that girls are performing better than boys in school and attaining higher levels of education. Gender equality in labor

³⁸ Government of Niue. February 2017. Water regulations. N° 2017/01.
<https://www.gov.nu/wb/media/NIUE%20REGULATIONS/Reg%202017-01%20Water%20Regulations%202017.PDF>

³⁹ Government of Niue. April 2020. Water ((Wellhead Protection) regulations N° 2020/03.
[https://www.gov.nu/wb/media/NIUE%20REGULATIONS/Reg%202020-03%20Water%20\(Wellhead%20Protection\)%20Regulations%202020.pdf](https://www.gov.nu/wb/media/NIUE%20REGULATIONS/Reg%202020-03%20Water%20(Wellhead%20Protection)%20Regulations%202020.pdf)

⁴⁰ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). November 2019. "New renewable energy project for Niue a step closer to being implemented". Press Release.
https://www.ws.undp.org/content/samoa/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2019/Renewable_Energy_Project_Niue.html.

⁴¹ NHPC 2017, Op. Cit. Figure 4.2, p 30.

force participation and employment could be an integral part of the Government's priority to retain people and offer decent employment opportunities.⁴²

The principal private sector activities for women are found in the tourism industry, while self-employment tends to be in handicrafts, food production and processing, which implies highly seasonal income streams, dependent on climate, environmental circumstances and, more recently, impacted by the effects of COVID-19.



Niue's State of the Environment Report 2019 acknowledges the critical need for citizens to understand the role of conservation as an integral management tool towards responsible land tenure and ownership. In addition, the Government is committed to enhancing access to freshwater. Universal household coverage of piped water supply remains a Government priority.⁴³



Niue has a 470,000 square kilometer EEZ. Pelagic fisheries include various species of tuna, billfish, mahi-mahi and wahoo. Inshore/nearshore fisheries include trevally, rock cod, sea cucumber and various shellfish. The management and development of Niue's fisheries is guided by a number of key policies, including the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zones Act 1996, the Domestic Fishing Act 1995, the Domestic Fishing Regulations 1996, and the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone License (Fees) Regulations 2010. In 2015, the Cabinet of Niue banned the exportation of coconut crab (local name 'uga') from Niue.

The country has made significant commitments towards protecting its marine resources, with a focus on ensuring improved management of fisheries stocks and supporting a marine-based tourism industry. For instance, Niue created a marine protected area that amounts to 40% of the nation's sovereign waters. No commercial or industrial fishing is allowed in that area except as indicated below.⁴⁴ The development of the EEZ wide Niue Nukutuluea Marine Spatial Management Plan has established a network of conservation and resource use zones. The Niue Moana Mahu large scale no-take marine protected area (the cited 40% of Niue's EEZ), is complemented by the Nukutulueatama Beveridge Reef special management area (SMA). Within the protected area, the "special management area" has specific regulations that allow discrete fishing and tourist activities. The objective is to maintain a balance between preserving marine resources and promoting a marine-based tourism.

⁴² Niue's National Strategy Plan 2016-2026 aims to retain people and provide employment opportunities comparable with those found in New Zealand, including remuneration levels of at least 80% of those in New Zealand.

⁴³ Tvniue.com. Esther Pahivi. December 2020. "Niue's State Of the Environment Report 2019 launched today". <https://tvniue.com/2020/12/niues-state-of-the-environment-report-2019-launched-today/>.

⁴⁴ National Geographic. August 2021 (last updated). "Niue's Fight to Sustain Itself". Article. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/niues-fight-sustain-itself/>



The small population helps mitigate environmental impacts. Niue has one of the lowest populations of all Pacific islands, which translates into the highest land area per capita and allows the environment to better cope with population demands.

3. Compliance with Human Rights Standards

Niue has been a self-governing state in free association with New Zealand since 1974. It is responsible for its internal affairs and has the power to sanction its own laws and ratify international treaties. New Zealand, on the other hand, provides the necessary economic and administrative assistance to Niue, as well as assistance with foreign affairs, security and defense at the request of the Niuean Government.⁴⁵

Niue is not a Member State of the United Nations and is therefore outside the scope of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, but it is a member of some of the UN specialized agencies and collaborates with Funds, Programmes and the UN System at large.



Out of the nine core international human rights treaties, four of the treaties extend to Niue as a result of New Zealand treaty action, and are set out below:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), signed on 28 December 1978
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), signed on 28 December 1978
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), signed on 22 November 1972
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), signed on 10 January 1985

Niue has not created specific legislation to receive these four treaties in domestic Law, but its legislation in vigour substantially complies with the requirements of these covenants.⁴⁶

Since November 1988, New Zealand's future participation in international agreement no longer extends to Niue except under Niue's express request. In light of Niue's admission to the membership of specialized agencies without any specifications or limitations, the UN Secretariat recognised the full treaty-making capacity of Niue in 1994.⁴⁷

Niue acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 20 December 1995 in its own right. Niue submitted its initial report to the CRC in 2010. Niue also acceded to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2016.

⁴⁵ The Constitution of Niue. 1974. Niue Constitution Act 1974 No 42.

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1974/0042/latest/whole.html#DLM412793>

⁴⁶ United Nations. Committee on the Rights of the Child. July 2011. Initial Report of States Parties due in 1998. Niue. CRC/C/NIU/1.

⁴⁷ Art.102, Repertory, Suppl. 8, Vol. VI (1989-1994)

The country does not have a national human rights institution (NHRI), and the Constitution does not explicitly protect some fundamental rights, such as the right to life or non-discrimination.⁴⁸ The Race Relations Act of 1972, however, prohibits discrimination on the basis of color, race, or ethnic or national origins.

Niue has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). But in 2011, Niue adopted a National Disability Policy to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

There is a need to modernize existing legislation and develop new laws and standards that would promote women's rights and gender equality. A draft Family Law bill has been under development for several years, and remains under consultation, delaying much-needed protections from domestic violence for women and children. Despite the lack of institutionalized protection for human rights, Niue is one of only two Pacific Island countries to have achieved all Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 deadline.

On children's rights, the Education Act 1989 provides for access to free and compulsory education to all children from the age of 5 until 16. Niue's customs do not gender-discriminate with regard to land rights or social/cultural importance.⁴⁹ However, young people are less viewed as individual rights-holders than as part of the community.

Niue does not have specific legislation for children or child rights, nor does it have substantive common law or examples on juvenile justice matters. Generally, children in Niue are treated as having the same right as adults. Children are not prohibited from working in the private sector and have no legal protection from poor working conditions or exploitation. However, The Niue Act 1966 establishes criminal liability for a range of offences that amount to abuse and neglect of children, including rape, incest, sexual intercourse with a girl under 15 years of age and assault. Domestic violence against children is an area of concern. In 2013, the CRC Committee noted that domestic violence was "pervasive" in Niue, with children often experiencing and witnessing physical and psychological abuse at home. There is no national policy or strategy to prevent and protect children from violence.⁵⁰

In terms of civil liberties, while the Constitution does not expressly guarantee freedom of expression, there are few restrictions on what can be said or published in Niue. Inciting racial disharmony is an imprisonable offence.⁵¹ Niueans have limited access to justice due to the lack of local lawyers and the absence of a system of legal aid.⁵² The National Strategic Plan 2009-2013 provided for the strengthening of the national justice system, particularly the Land Court, which has jurisdiction to hear matters pertaining to customary land rights.⁵³

⁴⁸ Human Rights in the Pacific. Op. Cit. P. 85.

⁴⁹ Committee on the Rights of the Child. Op. Cit.

⁵⁰ Committee on the Rights of the Child. June 2013. Concluding Observations on the Initial Report of Niue, adopted by the Committee at its sixty-second session (14 January–February 2013). Para. 40. CRC/C/NIU/CO/1.

⁵¹ According to the Race Relations Act, 1972.

⁵² Sisterson, Craig. June 2014. 'Bringing Justice to Niue'. Canterbury Tales. 20(5).

⁵³ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013, Op.Cit.

4. Multi-dimensional Risk Analysis

The main developmental challenges facing Niue pertain to economic dependency, health, and climate change. This section illustrates these risks and vulnerabilities keeping in view the island's short- and long-term development.



As one of the smallest countries in the world, Niue's economy is substantially dependent on very few economic options, notably the tourism sector, which has been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis. In 2018, Niue hosted about 10,450 international visitors (over 6 visitors per capita), generating NZ\$11.7M (US\$8.2M) in tourism revenue that accounted for 26.9% of the GDP. While this is somewhat a lower share of GDP than that in other Pacific countries, it is still significant for Niue.

The tourism industry is also critically important in terms of jobs, employing nearly 14% of the total population (226 individuals) in 2018, or 32% of the employed workforce. With a complete closure of borders since March 2020, the tourism sector has been severely impacted. It is estimated that, mainly due to the loss of tourism and the reduction in the export of some traditional local products, the country's GDP in FY 2021 (April 2020 - March 2021) has contracted by as much as 21%, directly impacting household income and consumption.

The deep economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 global crisis could take years to overcome. Even with the return to pre-COVID economic growth rate of 6%, it could take 4-5 years to reach the pre-crisis level of per capita income. Niue has not licensed any exploration of its deep seabed, where polymetallic manganese nodules and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts are supposed to be in large supply.

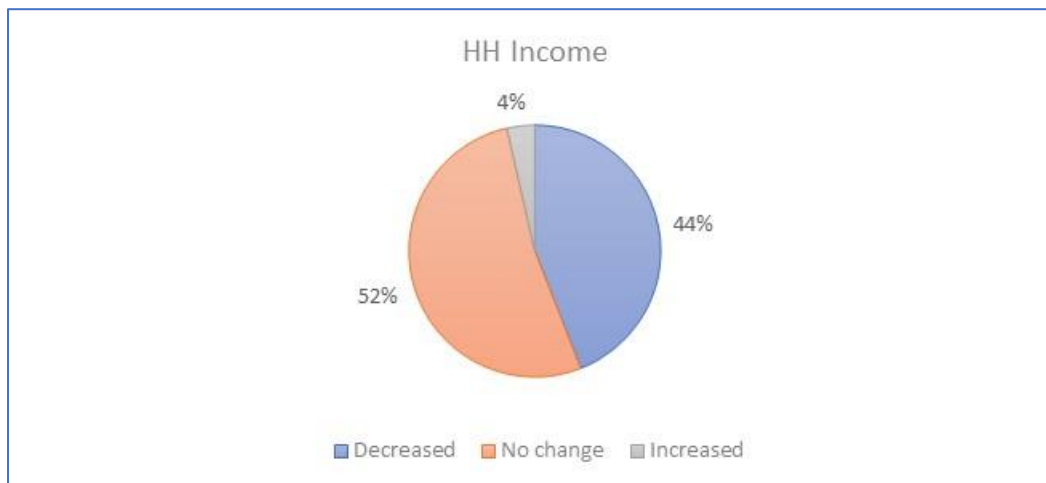


According to the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) conducted by the UN RCO in 2020, nearly 44% of the households on the island reported a decrease in household income due to border restrictions imposed in the wake of the COVID-19, reflecting the magnitude of the pandemic's toll on the local economy. Similarly, nearly 37% of the households said their household spending had also decreased due to border closure. According to the 2015 HIES, 60% of household incomes originates from wages and 18% from pensions.

While arrangements are being made to open a one-way quarantine-free travel between Niue and New Zealand, the possibility of two-way travel, which would allow New Zealand citizens

to come to Niue, is not expected until 2022 given the current COVID-19 situation in New Zealand, thus prolonging the economic hardship and vulnerabilities.⁵⁴

Reported change in Household Income due to COVID-19 Travel Restrictions



Source: UN RCO Rapid Online Survey, 2020.

Niue’s reliance on imports from overseas is high and increasing, given the lack of natural resources. The value of total imports for 2018 stood at NZ\$25.8 million (US\$18.1M), or 60% of the GDP. On the other hand, the value of total exports was only NZ\$ 2.6M (US\$1.8M), resulting in a trade deficit of NZ\$23.2M (US\$16.2M). Fuel accounts for a major share of total imports, followed by chemical products, machinery and mechanical appliances. Any global price increase in these categories of goods would translate into rising domestic prices.



Besides economic challenges, communicable diseases are also a growing concern, including *lymphatic filariasis* which is globally considered as a neglected tropical disease (NTD) and a leading cause of permanent disability worldwide.⁵⁵ Niue has high risk (2020) of food or waterborne diseases (bacterial diarrhea) and vector borne diseases (malaria). While Niue is still among the remaining few COVID-free places in the world, an outbreak of COVID would be a major shock to the country’s health system.

The population resident in Niue is also relatively old by Pacific standards, as many young professionals choose to live and work overseas. The returnees are often at near or above the

⁵⁴ Tvniue.com. Esther Pahivi. October 2020. “Quarantine free travel to New Zealand possibly next month for COVID free Niue passengers”. <https://tvniue.com/2020/12/quarantine-free-travel-to-new-zealand-possibly-next-month-for-covid-free-niue-passengers/>.

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Page last reviewed: October 22, 2018. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Global Health, Division of Parasitic Diseases and Malaria. <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lymphaticfilariasis>.

retirement age; as a result of this youth exodus, the island's population has declined from a peak of 5,200 in 1966 to just above 1,700 at present.



As mentioned in Niue's 3-year Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (adopted in 2012),⁵⁶ and in data presented by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR),⁵⁷ Niue is vulnerable to natural hazards, such as tropical cyclones, droughts, coastal flooding, earthquakes, and tsunamis, as well as manmade hazards, such as disease outbreaks and contamination of its limited fresh water supply. Niue's geographic isolation and capacity constraints pose serious challenges to its resilience and ability to manage these hazards and risks, making Niue reliant on external support - from New Zealand in particular.

Similar to other parts of the South Pacific, Niue is expected to experience less frequent, but increasingly intense storms and cyclones in the future, with wind speeds that can cause widespread devastation to infrastructure and loss of life - as experienced with TC Heta in 2004. Rainfall patterns may also see "a decrease in dry season rainfall and an increase in wet season rainfall"⁵⁸, negatively impacting agricultural production and other sectors that employ the majority of the population.

The regional coordination of monitoring, detection, analysis and forecasting of tropical cyclones is guided by the WMO Regional Association V (South-West Pacific) Tropical Cyclone Operational Plan for the South Pacific and South-East Indian Ocean (WMO RA-V TCOP).⁵⁹ The Operational Plan is reviewed annually by the WMO RA-V Tropical Cyclone Committee for the South Pacific and South-East Indian Ocean (WMO RA-V TCC).⁶⁰ Niue receives, through its Meteorological Service, information, advisories and warning on tropical cyclones from the WMO Regional Specialized Meteorological Center (RSMC) that is hosted in the Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) Headquarters in Nadi, Fiji.⁶¹ Niue also has access to additional information on these events via the Severe Weather Forecast Programme (SWFP) MetConnect.

Niue is susceptible to slow onset hydro-meteorological and ocean events including drought, El Niño, La Niña, Sea Surface Temperature (SST) and related impacts on peoples'

⁵⁶ Government of Niue and SPC. April 2012. Niue's Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change.

⁵⁷ World Bank. Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). Think Hazard. <https://thinkhazard.org/en/report/183-niue-n-z>. Accessed 4 October 2021.

⁵⁸ JNAP, Op. Cit.

⁵⁹ World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Accessed November 2021. Tropical Cyclone Operational Plans. <https://community.wmo.int/tropical-cyclone-operational-plans>.

⁶⁰ World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Accessed November 2021. Tropical Cyclone Programme (TCP). <https://community.wmo.int/activity-areas/tropical-cyclone-programme-tcp>

⁶¹ Niue Meteorological Act 2013 No. 36 was enacted on September 23, 2013.

livelihoods. The regional coordination mechanism (Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC)⁶² Pacific Islands Climate Services (PICS) Panel and WMO RA-V Pacific Regional Climate Center (RA-V Pacific RCC)⁶³) assist in developing the capacity of the PICTs' National Meteorological Services, including Niue's Meteorological Service, in climate prediction services. Niue is progressing well in providing information and predictions on slow onset hydro-meteorological and ocean events via climate updates or outlooks.

Niue has a sound policy foundation for the enhancement of the national tsunami warning and mitigation system. Niue National Disaster Plan 2010 outlines Niue's Tsunami Contingency Plan.⁶⁴ Under the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (PTWS), Niue Meteorological Service receives tsunami warning products from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) 24/7, to ensure it issues accurate and timely warning to the public. However, tsunami preparedness and mitigation at all levels needs strengthening, and the Tsunami Contingency Plan 2010 needs to be updated. These initiatives are aligned with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO)⁶⁵ Decision A-31/3.4.1 - specifically, the Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme endorsed at 31st Assembly of the IOC-UNESCO in June 2021.



Niue's rainforest has been significantly reduced over the past decades, mainly as a result of agricultural practices but also due to invasive species and extreme climate events. Niue's biodiversity has over time seen the loss of some species and the near extinction of others, primarily due to human activities. Given its remoteness and high transportation costs, the only crops which have export market potential are those which are high value, low volume and weight and are non-perishable, e.g., noni juice, Tahitian vanilla and sandalwood. Earlier plantations of mahogany have not grown satisfactorily. The utilization of native forest for timber is recommended at low scale and for local use only.



Waste management is among the key challenges of Niue given its limited landmass. As personal consumption increases, so does waste, creating additional challenges for waste management and sustainability.

⁶² The Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC) is a specialized subsidiary body of the Pacific Community Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), established at the Fourteenth Regional Meteorological Services Directors meeting in Majuro, Republic of Marshall Island in August 2011 to facilitate and coordinate the scientific and technical programme and activities of the Regional Meteorological Services. <https://www.pacificmet.net/pmc>

⁶³ The WMO RA-V Pacific Regional Climate Centre (RCC) Network is a virtual Centre of Excellence that assists National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in the Pacific Islands region to deliver better climate services and products and to strengthen their capacity to meet national climate information and service delivery needs. <https://www.pacificmet.net/rcc>

⁶⁴ Niue Government. November 2010. Niue National Disaster Plan.

⁶⁵ Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

5. Financial Landscape

The Government has established the Niue International Trust Fund (NITF) to encourage self-reliance and decrease dependency on ODA. Nonetheless, Niue relies extensively on economic assistance provided by New Zealand. The Government received NZ\$29.9M (US\$21M) from New Zealand’s ODA for FY20/21, more than 60% of the country’s GDP, plus a financial allocation to support COVID-19 response measures: NZ\$7M (US\$4.9M) on April 1, 2020, and NZ\$6M (US\$4.2M) on July 30, 2020.⁶⁶ With this assistance, Niue can avoid borrowing and accumulating public debt. Nevertheless, the country is entitled to borrow on concessional terms from ADB (which it joined in March 2019 as its 68th and most recent member) and is eligible for IBRD-equivalent financing. The Asian Development Bank has committed a total of US\$0.5M in grants and US\$0.225M in country-specific technical assistance for Niue. Niue is not a WB or IMF member.

New Zealand provides direct budget support and administrative assistance under its constitutional obligation and has agreed on joint priorities like strengthening the capability of Niue’s public institutions, building and effectively maintaining resilient infrastructure, sustainably growing tourism and the wider private sector, protecting Niue’s environment and achieving improved education, health and community safety outcomes. New Zealand’s partnership has increased domestic revenue, 40% renewable energy target has been achieved through new solar, the link to a submarine cable is in place enabling improved connectivity. Police, maritime and aviation services are progressively achieving international standards. Border control, customs, aviation safety and security, and disaster preparedness have been strengthened. In addition, New Zealand has focused on an improved health workforce capability and access to quality health services have been supported.

The UN system collectively invested more than US\$1.5M in 2020 in Niue’s development priorities.⁶⁷ More than 70% of this investment targeted initiatives on climate change resilience, environmental protection and renewable energy. Around 14% of the budget focused on the health system’s response to COVID-19, with procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE), medical supplies and other equipment, training of health workers, risk communications and community engagement on prevention measures. In 2021, the UN system has more than doubled its support to Niue’s with an investment of US\$3.8M.⁶⁸ Almost 90% or US\$3.4M of the budget targets interventions on climate change and the environment. UNFPA has supported Niue through the timely procurement of a quality-assured reproductive health commodities, with the aim of reducing high levels of unmet needs for family planning.

Australia has determined a 2021-22 bilateral allocation [budget estimate] of AU\$1.4M (US\$1M). 2021-22 total Australian ODA [budget estimate] is AU\$3.5M (US\$2.5M). 2019-

⁶⁶ Tvniue.com. November 2020. “NZ contributes a further \$6M to support Niue’s Covid-19 response”. <https://tvniue.com/2020/07/nz-contributes-a-further-6m-to-support-niues-covid-19-response/>

⁶⁷ Joint Country Action Plan 2020 - Niue, UNCT Results Report- [UNSDG | UN in Action - Samoa \(MCO\)](#)

⁶⁸ Niue Joint Country Action Plan 2021.

20 total Australian ODA [budget actual] was AU\$4M (US\$2.9M). This ODA is focused on three pillars: Pillar 1 is centered on health security around COVID-19, waste management (construction of a new recycling centre, improvements to existing landfill sites, the purchase of new equipment, including a refuse collection truck, and public education campaigns around waste management and recycling), the Niue component of the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Programme (PACC), implemented by UNDP and SPREP on household water security through the installation of rainwater tanks. Pillar 2 on stability includes a new satellite dish and scholarships and Pillar 3 on economic recovery includes direct budget support (DBS), assistance to re-build the wharf (damaged during Tropical Cyclone Tino in 2020) and import of essential goods.

The country still needs to improve public financial management. The Auditor General of New Zealand and Niue wrote to the Government of Niue in 2018 and 2019 outlining persistent issues with Government spending exceeding budgets, and inadequate accounting oversight and revenue collection processes. The AG noted that there was insufficient oversight of Government projects leading to incomplete financial records and indications that donor funds had been used for expenditure outside of the original project plan. The AG estimated that there was a shortfall of \$NZ820,000 (US\$574,000) in Government revenue from a failure to collect port charges and import duties.⁶⁹ The Government responded to some of these concerns stating that lack of public financial management capacity was an issue and that more support was needed in this regard.⁷⁰ The Government of Niue appointed the accounting firm Deloitte in 2020 to assist with responding to the recommendations of the Auditor General.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Tvniue.com. November 2019. “Auditor General’s report tabled in Parliament...”. <https://tvniue.com/2020/04/auditor-generals-report-tabled-in-parliament-highlighting-several-key-matters-of-concern/>

⁷⁰ RNZ. October 2018. “Niue defends accounting issues, blaming NZ Auditor General” <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/368412/niue-defends-accounting-issues-blaming-nz-auditor-general>

⁷¹ RNZ. April 2020. “Auditor-General warns Niue over poor record-keeping and misspending”. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/414493/auditor-general-warns-niue-over-poor-record-keeping-and-misspending>

Conclusion

As a small country in the South Pacific Ocean, with a total area of 260 square kilometers and a population of 1,700 people, Niue faces many fundamental structural challenges similar to those that generally characterize small island development states, perhaps in a more extreme fashion – remoteness, small size, enhanced risk of climate-related disasters, and dependence on overseas development assistance (ODA), tourism revenues and imports. In the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the country’s remoteness has also resulted in some benefits, including the COVID-free status. This should put the economy on a solid recovery path once/if international travel and tourism resume in 2022.

In the years preceding the global COVID crisis, the country has performed well on the SDGs. Niue has achieved universal access to clean water, universal access to education and has the lowest rates of infant and maternal mortality in the region. The fact that all people live on a single island enforces strong communal culture and facilitates delivery of services. The small population size helps mitigate environmental impacts. In the COVID context, with assistance from New Zealand, the country has also achieved almost universal vaccine coverage of the targeted adult population.

However, many challenges remain to achieve Agenda 2030, including reducing the prevalence of NCDs and obesity, adapting to an ageing population, addressing gender inequality, waste management bottlenecks, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity. Climate change and its related impacts, including more intense tropical cyclones, present a constant and growing threat to livelihoods and environmental sustainability.

Niue has drawn a national development vision in the past decade which is buttressed by a number of sector-wide diagnostics, major policies and pieces of legislation, all responding to the intention to support economic activity and enhance social protection within parameters of risk reduction, fiscal and environmental sustainability. These include the Health Strategic Plan 2011-2021, the National Disability Policy (2011), the National CRC Report (2010), the Sustainable Energy Roadmap (the basis of the country’s latest National Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement, part of the Government’s plan to move away from fossil fuels and reach the target of producing 80% of its electricity from renewable energy sources by 2025), the Accelerating Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Applications Project (2019), the Water Act (2012), the Sustainable Environment Report (2019), the Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk management (2012), the Niue Meteorological Act (2013), the Agriculture Sector Plan (2015-2019), and the numerous regulations governing Niue’s fisheries and EEZ, mentioned above.

As the overarching planning document, Niue’s National Strategic Plan 2016-2026 summarises its development priorities around the theme “Working Together to Protect the People and the Environment”, recognizing heritage, responsibility and connection to the land and sea. The Plan has seven National Development Pillars which are: Finance and Economic

Development, Good Governance, Infrastructure, Environment, Social Protection, Tāoga (“Birth Right”) Niue and the Private Sector. The Plan also recognizes that the Government alone cannot make *Niue ke Monuina* (“Prosperous Niue”) happen. In order for the Plan to work, a whole of Niue approach is needed.

The dearth of quality data for progress measurement remains a persistent problem. There are many reasons for this, including the lack of physical presence on the ground from UN and other international development agencies, Niue’s absence from the voluntary national review (VNR) process, and limited national (human and financial) resources to produce timely and reliable statistics. Data-driven policy interventions will require an improvement in the local capacity to collect, analyze and disseminate statistics. The Government could consider avenues to participate in the VNR process, which would help reveal the development needs in facts and figures and would trigger a more evidence-based discussion on how to prioritise and satisfy these needs. The UN Country Team, together with the country’s development partners, stand ready to support the Government and people of Niue in the pursuit of the achievement of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

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