



T&D TRENDS & DEVELOPMENTS E-NEWSLETTER

E-newsletter for the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting Work Programme

A Message from the Secretary General's Desk



With the recent ongoing challenges facing the global economy, 2011 has been absorbed with economic uncertainty, matters not lost to regional policy makers, particularly the Forum Leaders and Forum Economic Ministers.

The global economy continues to recover, though the recovery is not evenly balanced. While many advanced economies are experiencing moderate gains, unemployment remains stubbornly high in most of these countries. Overall, with improved global conditions, real challenges including inflationary risks, are

likely to remain. A key risk is that of growth without jobs, not an unlikely scenario for Pacific countries.

The Secretariat continues to monitor developments, and periodically keep its Members updated. As such, you will find in this edition of T&D, commentary on the economic outlook for the region, as well as internationally, and a review of inflationary pressures from higher global food and fuel prices.

Forum Economic Ministers continue to provide guidance to Member countries on measures to improve economic growth to enhance resilience to events such as the current crisis, and will again in 2012 be provided with opportunities to review progress and re-assess regional economic conditions and responses. This edition of T&D also covers broader FEMM initiatives in support of growth, including the Pacific Financial Management Roadmap, Financial Inclusion, and the Pacific Regional Audit Initiative.

On behalf of the Pacific Is-

In this Issue - December 2011

1. Regional Economic Update
2. Public Financial Management Roadmap
3. Global Economic Outlook
4. Financial Inclusion
5. Pacific Financial inclusion Programme
6. Pacific Regional Audit Initiative
7. Sub-regional Audit Support Programme
8. Co-operative Performance Audit into Solid Waste Management
9. In Brief Update Series
10. Commodity Price Outlook
11. Staff Profile

lands Forum Secretariat, I wish you all the best for the festive season.

Tuiloma Neroni Slade
Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Regional Economic Update

Economic growth projections for most Forum Island Countries in 2011 and 2012 are expected to be weak, however a relatively positive outlook is expected for Nauru, PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

Although the current economic crisis has reduced growth prospects for most leading economies, at this stage the consensus view suggests that the Pacific region will experience less significant impacts. In part, this is due to relatively optimistic economic prospects of the region's major trading partners, Australia and New Zealand. However, growing inflationary pressures as well as indirect effects from the economic crisis will contribute to downside risks to the region.

[Continued on page 2](#)

Figure 1: FIC GDP Growth Outlook ■ 2011 ■ 2012

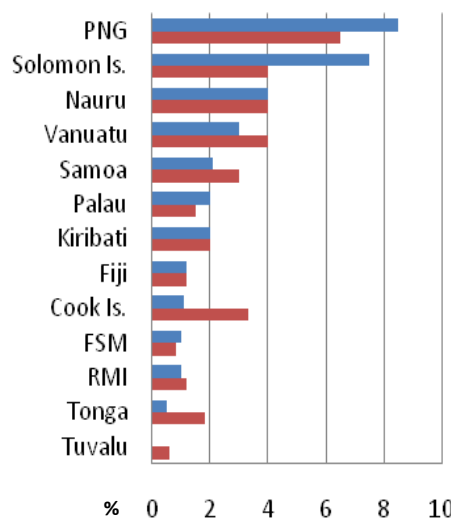
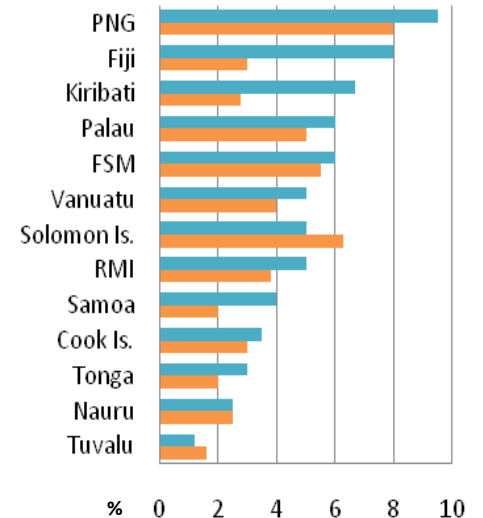


Figure 2: FIC Inflation Outlook ■ 2011 ■ 2012



Regional Economic Update [Continued from page 1](#)

Favorable conditions related to commodity exports ensures an optimistic outlook for the PNG economy from LNG and minerals production, the Solomon Islands economy from mining and logging activities, and the Nauru economy through its phosphate exports. Vanuatu, Samoa and the Cook Islands in particular are expected to benefit from an increase in tourism from Australia and NZ, especially in 2012. Growth for the other FICs remain low.

Driven by high fuel and food

prices, an average inflation rate of about 4 percent is expected across all FICs in 2011 (see Figure 2), increasing inflationary pressures and contributing to downside risks for the region. Effects of the global economic crisis on the FICs, although limited at this stage, could also affect growth prospects for the region indirectly, through trade and investment linkages between the Eurozone and the Pacific's economic partners, declining values of Pacific trust funds, and possible declines in tourism and re-

mittance flows from other markets such as the United States and Japan.

However, the positive outlook over the short term in the major FIC trading partner economies of Australia and NZ support an anticipated increase in tourism to the Pacific, particularly in 2012.

For more on the implications of the current crisis on the region click [here](#), and for more on growth prospects for the FICs, click [here](#).

Global Economic Outlook

The global economy is forecast to grow by 4 percent in both 2011 and 2012.

Recent developments in the United States and the Eurozone are threatening the global recovery and risks are clearly to the downside. While the downward revisions have been attributed mainly to the recent credit market and economic crisis, the IMF identifies economic shocks from the Japanese earthquake, and tensions in the Middle East and North Africa, as contributing factors to the weaker global economic outlook.

Key drivers of growth over the near term include the strong rebound of activity in Japan, the drop in oil and food prices, and solid demand growth in key emerging market economies led by India and China.

In the advanced economies the situation is one of weak economic performance, while in the developing countries the challenge is to ensure their economies are not overheating.

For advanced economies the 2011 growth estimates have been revised down to 1.6 percent in the September forecast (from 2.2 percent forecast in June), and also down to 1.9 percent for 2012 (from 2.2 percent forecast in June) (see Table 1).

Prospects for emerging mar-

ket economies have become more uncertain, with the IMF forecasting growth for the emerging markets as a whole to drop from 6.6 percent (June estimate) to 6.4 percent (September estimate) for 2011, and from 6.4 percent (June estimate) to 6.1 percent (September estimate) for 2012.

Australia's growth forecast has been revised down from 3 percent (June estimate) to 1.8 percent (September estimate) in 2011. However it is expected to rebound in 2012 to 3.3 percent as the economy continues to benefit from emerging Asia's demand for commodities. In contrast to Australia, the IMF revised New Zealand's growth forecast for 2011 up from 1 percent (June esti-

mate) to 2 percent (September estimate) supported mainly by the post-earthquake reconstruction. However, the IMF revised down the 2012 forecast for New Zealand from 4 percent (June estimate) to 3.8 percent (September estimate).

According to the IMF, for the recovery to strengthen action needs be taken to remove the uncertainty clouding global markets with policies that accommodate economic growth, while at the same time maintain the path to reducing debt.

For more information on Global Economic Prospects click [here](#).

	2009	2010	2011		2012	
			June up-date	Sept. Up-date	June up-date	Sept. Up-date
Global Growth	-0.5	5.1	4.3	4	4.5	4
Advanced Economies	-3.4	3	2.2	1.6	2.6	1.9
US	-3.5	3	2.5	1.5	2.7	1.8
Eurozone	-4.3	1.8	2	1.6	1.7	1.1
Emerging Economies	2.8	7.4	6.6	6.4	6.4	6.1
China	9.2	10.3	9.6	9.5	9.5	9
India	6.8	10.1	8.2	7.8	7.8	7.5
Brazil	-0.6	7.5	4.1	3.8	3.6	3.6
Russia	-7.8	4	4.8	4.3	4.5	4.1
Australia	1.3	2.7	3	1.8	3.5	3.3
NZ	1.6	1.7	1	2	4	3.8

Table 1: Global economic prospects (Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Sept. 2011)

Pacific Financial Management (PFM) Roadmap

Forum Island Countries (FIC) recognise the need to improve their public financial management to encourage growth and reduce poverty. An effective public financial management (PFM) system is essential to the functioning of government, and helps deliver the macroeconomic stability vital for sustainable growth and to enable efficient and effective service delivery. It covers planning, collection, spending, reporting and audit of public monies and involves systems and staff in every agency of government.

At the 2010 Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting (FEMM), Ministers endorsed a [Roadmap](#), aimed at progressive strengthening of FIC PFM systems.

The PFM roadmap is a simple focused set of principles and practices applicable across the region. It aims to help countries and partners jointly understand the strengths and weaknesses of PFM systems (the starting point), develop appropriate reform objectives (the destination) and ensure development partner support is coordinated behind government priorities (the journey).

The starting point: PEFA Assessments every 3-4 years.

Regular assessments should form the core of FICs reform processes. Periodic—every 3 to 4 years—assessments of the PFM system allow progress against reform objectives to be tracked and priorities to be reassessed. They also provide a basis for productive dialogue with development partners.

The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) framework is the most widely accepted assessment tool, but it is not comprehensive or infallible. International experience suggests that it is important for the assessment process to be transparent and have strong government ownership and participation.

The destination: Practical, shared action plans derived from PEFA Assessments.

PEFA assessments should be accompanied by an update of governments' PFM reform strategies. An assessment can only contribute to improvements in PFM if the reform process takes account of its findings and development partner support adapts to any resulting changes in priorities. Action plans could include explicit targets relating to the anticipated change in PEFA markings, with

additional actions that would be designed to enable this objective to be reached. Action plans should also clearly articulate the development partner support and capacity building that is required to achieve their objectives.

The journey: Dedicated regional PEFA resources and coordinated donor support.

The previous ad-hoc process for PEFA assessment has been strengthened by establishing a central point for supporting the PEFA assessment process in the Pacific based in the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC). That resource will build and disseminate good practice in Pacific PEFA assessments, coordinate and help execute assessments, including through participation, and review and assist in the development of PFM reform strategies.

The Forum Secretariat has partnered with PFTAC and AusAID to provide technical expertise to undertake PEFA assessments in Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Marshall Islands in the last quarter of this year.

[Click here for the 2010 FEMM paper on the Roadmap.](#)

Financial Inclusion

The Pacific is one of the least banked regions in the world. In some Pacific countries it is estimated that less than 10% of the population have access to basic financial services. Challenging geography, poor infrastructure, persistent poverty and subsistence livelihoods have all contributed to a lack of financial inclusion in the Pacific.

Traditional microcredit programmes and microfinance institutions have had limited success in the region due to high costs, high delinquency and the inability to achieve economies of scale in small island states. Lessons learned in other countries and the new technologies developed in recent years provide an opportunity to provide banking services to the Pacific region.

A paper tabled at the 2006 FEMM reported that there is a gap, a 'missing middle', between the tradi-

tional subsistence economy, on the one hand, and the modern monetised economy, on the other. In many other parts of the developing world this gap is filled by small- and micro-enterprise economic activities, the so-called 'informal sector', which is often seen as a kind of stepping stone. Since island peoples find it hard to cross the gap from the traditional to the modern sector the report argued that policy should stimulate informal economic activity to fill in the 'missing middle'.

In addition instead of looking at just microcredit as a solution to the problem, the study points to the importance of eliminating 'financial exclusion' of Forum Island peoples, the situation where many are denied access to any financial services, not just credit. The study found that microfinance, and not just microcredit, is necessary to achieve the financial

inclusion of island peoples.

In 2009, FEMM endorsed the MoneyPACIFIC Goals to be achieved by 2020 to further strengthen financial education and the creation of more inclusive financial sectors in the Pacific. These Goals are:

1. All schoolchildren to receive financial education through core curricula.
2. All adults to have access to financial education.
3. Simple and transparent consumer protection to be in place.
4. To halve the number of households without access to basic financial services.

[To access the FEMM paper on Financial Inclusion click here.](#)

Financial Inclusion: Partners Work



The Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP) was developed to bring new energy and ideas on financial inclusion and financial literacy to the Pacific. Its strategy is to seek out and introduce new ways of serving hard-to-reach populations, and to foster greater commitment and cooperation among regional stakeholders to building inclusive financial systems throughout the Pacific. Some of the initiatives that the PFIP is undertaking to achieve this goal are outlined as follows.

Branchless Banking

The use of mobile phones, point of sale devices, smart cards and other technologies for the ease of payments, as well as third party agents, makes the delivery of financial services more cost-effective and can begin to reach previously underserved and unbanked populations in the Pacific.

For example PFIP has provided funding to Vodafone Fiji for its M-PAISA product to enable up to 250,000 customers, by the end of 2011, to inexpensively make and receive payments through their mobile phones. The product has lowered the cost of domestic money transfer and allowed greater penetration into rural areas, which stands to greatly benefit low income households. Receiving international remittances is also now possible through this system.

In addition PFIP has also pro-

vided funding to Digicel to introduce a low cost 'mobile wallet' (m-wallet) in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. The m-wallet can also be used in partnership with banks, MFIs and others and will offer domestic money transfer, international remittance, bill payment, and savings. It is expected that by the end of 2012, the service will benefit up to 500,000 people across the Pacific, of which 40% will be women and 30% living in rural villages.

Financial Competency

Enabling people to acquire the skills and knowledge to manage personal finances and to participate in the formal economy leads to greater financial inclusion. In its work, the PFIP is guided by the Money Pacific goals that commit governments to promote universal financial education in schools and support financial education for adults.

Fiji is presently involved in groundbreaking work in the area of child financial education. The Fiji Financial Education Curriculum Development (FinED Fiji) Project primarily entails the integration and strengthening of financial education within the Fiji school curriculum for primary and secondary schools in Fiji. The special focus of the FinED Fiji Project is on personal money management and investment.

G2P Modes

PFIP has developed a project in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Westpac Fiji and AusAID Fiji to convert over 25,000 very low-income clients, mostly women, from an insecure and costly cash benefit system to an electronic

payment system that creates low cost savings services for all clients.

Microinsurance

Microinsurance refers to insurance products that are designed for low income people, and enable those insured to hedge against the recurring risks of falling sick, death of the primary income earner or destruction of crops, assets and sources of livelihoods. To that end PFIPs first partner was Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) Fiji which introduced "MicroLife," an endowment product, providing death, funeral, and accident benefits over five to ten year terms.

Financial Inclusion Policy & Regulation

Building an enabling legal and political environment for financial inclusion in partnership with policy makers and regulators is crucial for the development of new and alternative financial delivery channels, and for the success of products geared towards low-income and rural people.

PFIP supports research on how to reach more of the unbanked with appropriate and affordable financial services, through initiatives such as the Pacific Central Banks Financial Inclusion Working Group and other policy advocacy forums. It has helped several central banks to develop financial inclusion strategies and plans and supported the training of central bankers on ways to bring low income citizens into the financial system.

To learn more please visit www.pfip.org.

In Brief Economic Update Series and Related Information Links

In order to keep its Members and other stakeholders informed of economic issues important to the region, the Forum Secretariat recently launched an *In Brief Update Series*, under the FEMM work programme. To date 6 issues have been released, namely:

- An update on [Global Economic Prospects](#);
- the [Current Economic Crisis](#) and the events leading up to it;

- [Implications for the Region](#) of current economic conditions, with a brief outline of transmission mechanisms;
- [Current Commodity Price Trends](#);
- Traditional [Economic Growth Drivers for the Pacific region](#); and
- An update on [Economic Prospects for the Pacific Region](#).

[Click here for more information on the In Brief Series.](#)

The Forum Secretariat has also recently created a page on its website outlining relevant information emanating from external meetings related to the FEMM Work Programme.

[Click here for more information on the meeting outcomes.](#)

Pacific Regional Audit Initiative (PRAI)

The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration formed the basis for further development of Pacific public auditing through the Pacific Regional Audit Initiative (PRAI) which was endorsed by the Forum Leaders and FEMM in 2008.

The PRAI's overarching objective is to raise Pacific public auditing to uniformly high standards. The PRAI design was developed through

an extensive consultation process, over a two-year period under the guidance of the 25-member Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI), with support from ADB and AusAID under the Forum Secretariat's oversight.

A subsequent feasibility study outlined benchmarks for performance of regional audit institutions; designing a sub-regional audit approach for Kiribati, Nauru, and Tu-

valu; developing mechanisms for co-operative performance audits; and establishing a strengthened coordination mechanism. This paved the way for the establishment of the PASAI Secretariat, which was officially opened in January 2010 in Auckland, New Zealand.

For more information, click [here](#) to access the 2008 FEMM report.

Pioneering a New Approach to Capacity Building in the Pacific: Sub-regional Audit Support to Public Auditing in Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu

The Sub-regional Audit Support (SAS) programme is one of the programmes of the PRAI, an initiative of the Pacific Plan. The Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu are at differing development stages, but face similar challenges in the areas of human resource capacity and the efficacy of their audit methodologies and systems.

Common challenges include the small number of trained and qualified personnel, the disproportionate effects of staff turnover or absences, and difficulties in attracting and retaining staff. These issues mean that public accounts are often not audited to high standards in a timely manner. As a result, the SAS programme is being introduced for Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu in re-

sponse to these concerns. It was envisaged that other countries will be considered under the programme in the future as it progresses.

The SAS approach requires four auditors from the three countries to work on a co-operative basis in the audit of government entities in the three countries. The first round of the programme started in August 2009 and was completed in April 2010. This is the first time that a mix of capacity supplementation and capacity building approach has been provided to countries to help sustain efforts (see Figure 3).

Throughout the three countries, the range of audits carried out included the Whole of Government accounts (Tuvalu), telecommunications and provident funds (Kiribati), and stateowned/public enterprises

(Nauru). Most of these audits of financial statements were substantially in arrears. The balance dates for the audits ranged from 30 June 2006 to 31 December 2008. Kiribati and Tuvalu were able to have their audit opinions presented to Parliament, and the financial statements were subsequently subject to Public Accounts Committee scrutiny.

Some of benefits from the audits include:

- an increased understanding of the role of Supreme Audit Institutions within the audited entities, including a two-way understanding of information required for preparing financial statements and their subsequent audit; and
- internal capacity development with each Supreme Audit Institution, including identification of champions for improved audit practice, improved understanding of audit issues, and improved documentation for supporting opinions and management recommendations.

The SAS programme has started an important transformation. The second round (which commenced June 2011) and third round will build on the achievements of the first round, with many more audit backlogs being completed, while local capacities are being strengthened. This capacity supplementation approach to transform national audit capacities, is the pioneering aspect of the SAS sub-regional approach.

To access the report click [here](#).

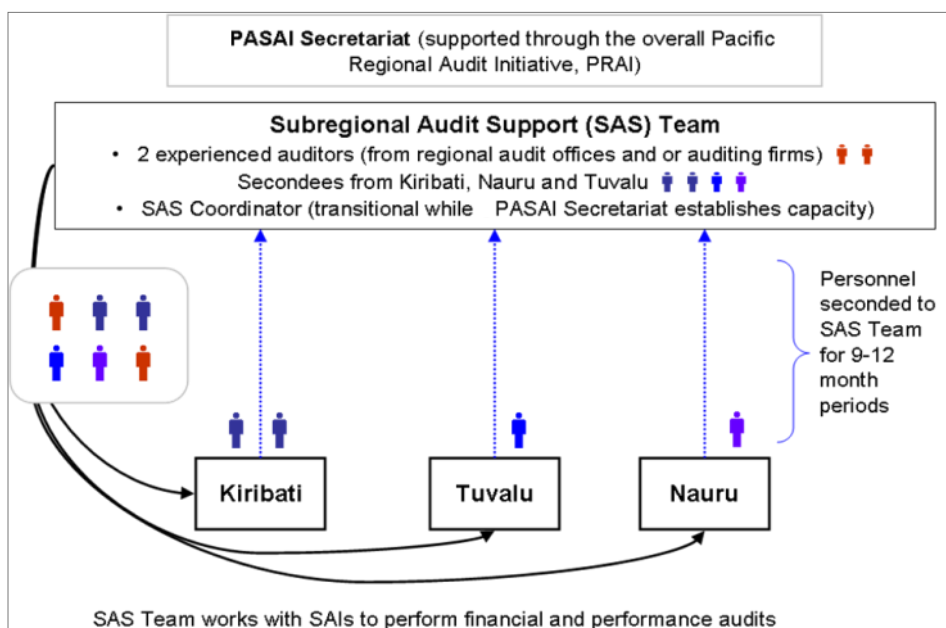


Figure 3: The Subregional Audit Support (SAS) approach

Pacific Report on the Co-operative Performance Audit into Solid Waste Management

A cooperative performance audit involves a group of audit offices carrying out an audit on the same subject at the same time, using their own methodology but cooperating at key points in the audit cycle and learning from each other during the audit process. As part of PRAI, heads of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) of the region decided that the first co-operative performance audit in the Pacific region should be to assess the effectiveness of solid waste management in selected locations within ten FICs.

For SAIs, the benefits of engaging in cooperative audits include facilitating mutual sharing and learning, capacity building, networking, and identifying good practices. The results of this are twofold:

1. increased capacity within the FIC to carry out performance audits, with the longer term aim of all FIC audit offices producing individual reports without the need for a formal cooperative audit process; and
2. individual SAI reports on solid waste management in the FIC, plus a regional overview report, expected to have an audience and influence beyond the national Parliaments in the FIC and the audit community.

Ten PASAI members participated in the region's first cooperative performance audit, which was the first performance audit done for five of the participating SAIs. The audit teams worked together on the planning phase and the reporting phase of the audit, using a peer review approach. They also worked with support from expert advisers including in-country support during fieldwork, audit analysis, and report drafting for the majority of audit teams.

The aim of the audit was for each participating SAI to assess the effectiveness of solid waste management in FIC by auditing:

- the existence of a legal and policy framework for solid waste management;
- the process by which the legal and policy framework is implemented, including whether risks to implementation have been considered; and
- compliance with the legal and policy framework, including monitoring arrangements.

Overall Conclusions

Although the majority of the ten audited FICs had a legal framework in place, implementation of the framework was variable. The reasons for this included:

- strategies and plans to give effect to legislation were still in draft form;
- there were poor coordination arrangements between agencies responsible for implementation;
- there was a lack of clarity as to roles and responsibilities; and
- funding constraints often limited the implementation of key aspects designed to ensure the achievement of policy objectives, including sufficient funding for community awareness programs.

In addition, the monitoring and reporting systems that were in place were not adequate to capture reliable data to provide assurance that risks were addressed or to inform future planning and decision-making. Each SAI made recommendations suggesting where improvements could be made. The implementation of which should lead to improved solid waste management in the Pacific region, with associated population health and environmental benefits.

Since the audit, there have been subsequent cooperative performance audits covering the topics of access to freshwater resources, and returns from fisheries resources.

To access the full report click [here](#).

Regional Remittances Updates

SendMoneyPacific

Forum Economic Ministers have in the past emphasised the important role of remittances as a source of national income and economic growth for many FICs, and agreed that remittance fees are generally too high which reduces the level of funds received. These discussions have resulted in a number of initiatives to reduce costs of remittances, such as sendmoneypacific.org, a price comparison website for remittances in the Pacific.

With costs in the region traditionally very high compared with other parts of the world, SendMoneyPacific (SMP) released data showing

that costs for sending money from Australia and New Zealand have decreased by up to 70 percent since its launch in January 2009. Between January 2009 and July 2011, costs from Australia have fallen by 6.3 percent and costs from New Zealand by 3.8 percent.

However, of more relevance for many Pacific Islanders, is the steep fall in money transfer operator (MTO) costs in Australia and New Zealand to Fiji, Samoa and Tonga – the three largest Pacific communities. MTOs are generally more popular than banks amongst these communities. The launch of new products, including prepaid cards and online money transfers has helped to

drive costs down for sending money at a far greater rate than the country averages.

Australia to Fiji MTO costs are down by almost two thirds, from 18 percent to 7 percent for AUD \$200 transfers. MTO costs from Australia to Samoa have more than halved, from 14.5 percent to 5.8 percent, with costs to Tonga also down from 10.2 percent to 8.8 percent. The steep decline in money transfer costs underlines the key role that initiatives such as SendMoneyPacific have had in helping Pacific communities save money.

Continued on [page 8](#)

Global Commodity Price Trends

Following consistent increases through the second half of 2010 to April 2011, the prices of major commodities abruptly eased in two waves, first in May and June of 2011, and then again in August 2011. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) commodity price index declined by 5 percent between April and July 2011, and a further decline of 5 percent in August 2011, and has remained fairly stable since (See Figure 1).

The IMF reports that upside price risks remain high for energy and food, the two commodity groups that matter most for global growth and inflation prospects.

The broad easing of commodity prices largely reflects a weakened outlook for the global economy. According to the IMF World Economic Outlook, global growth is expected to rebound slightly in the second half of 2011. However this rebound is not expected to place strong upward pressure on commodity prices as it will be driven largely by a moderate pickup of growth in advanced economies.

Energy Markets

In energy markets, oil price volatility spiked in May 2011 and rose again in August 2011 during the height of the Libya-related oil market disruption (See Figure 2). After surging through April 2011 and peaking at close to \$120 a barrel at the end of that month, oil prices eased through the remainder of the second quarter and again in August 2011, trading at about \$100 a barrel since mid August. Global copra prices have been increasing generally in line with energy prices as an alternative to oil based fuels.

According to the International Energy Agency, global oil demand has grown at a moderate but steady pace in recent months, and is expected to grow by 1.1 percent in

2011, and 1.4 percent for 2012. For the advanced economies, oil demand growth was 0.2 percent higher in August 2011 relative to the same period in 2010, with demand growth from Japan and Europe outweighing weaker US demand. In developing economies, oil demand was higher by 2.7 percent in August 2011 relative to the same period in 2010.

Food Markets

Food prices have fallen modestly from their peak in recent months, but they remain very high when compared with the decade through 2010 (See Figure 1). The IMF food price index during the third quarter of 2011 is about 20 percent higher than for the same quarter of 2010, and significantly above the average real price over the past 10 years. Expectations for farm output in 2011 have stabilised, with relatively improved output growth outlook for 2012. Sugar prices have also been increasing, reaching its highest ever during this year (See Figure 3) driven mainly by strong demand from emerging Asian countries.

Risks remain high in food markets as inventory buffers are very low for some important crops. The most immediate threat is that key crops will suffer from another round of weather related supply shocks. A combination of low inventories, volatile weather, and other demand uncertainties raises the prospect of further price spikes over the next 12 to 18 months. At the same time, demand remains strong with rapid increases in food consumption for emerging market economies showing no signs of moderating.

Due to the recent events affecting capital markets and stock prices, the price of gold has been rising as demand increased due to investors looking for safer alternative assets. Gold prices have been steadily rising over the last year, and peaked at around US\$ 1,770 per ounce in September (See Figure 2).

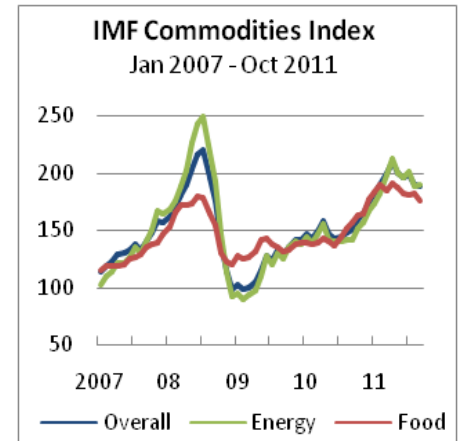


Figure 4: Source IMF

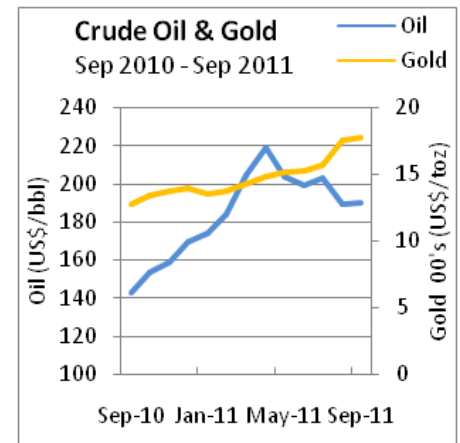


Figure 5: Source: US EIA, World Bank

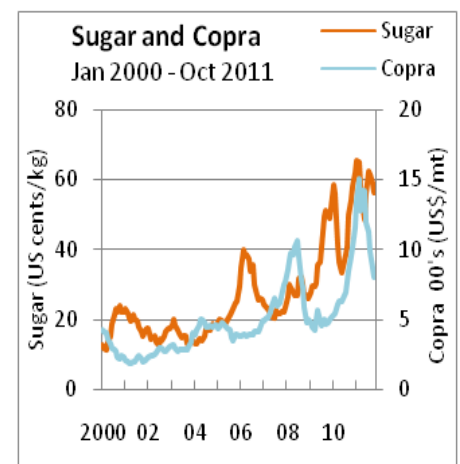


Figure 6: Source World bank

For more information on global commodity price trends please click [here](#).

T&D December 2011 Edition

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Visit us at www.forumsec.org, or go directly to the FEMM Work Programme [here](#).



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Excelling together for the people of the pacific



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM
40th Anniversary 1971-2011

Regional Remittances Updates Continued from [page 6](#)

Dramatic cost reductions have also helped to drive costs down also been seen in New Zealand, from 11.7 percent to 3.5 percent. with MTO costs to Fiji almost halved, from 14.1 percent to 7.4 percent. Tonga costs are also sharply down, from 11.6 percent to 7.7 percent. The wide choice of MTO services to Samoa, with 11 MTO products to choose from, has

Click [here](#) to access the latest report presented at FEMM 2011, and [here](#) for the report by Australia and NZ presented at FEMM 2010.

Staff Profile

Name: William Yari
Position: Young Professional - Trade policy
Home Country: PNG



Q. Why did you apply to work at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat?

A. It's a regional organisation looking after the interests of its members, and working here involves a variety of issues that affect the Forum Island Countries. So, given my interests, it is the ideal organisation to commence my career.

Q. What are your areas of responsibility?

A. My responsibilities are supporting Trade Policy staff, through: undertaking research on trade matters; support to organising regional meetings/workshops; keeping up to date with trade developments in the region; and support in providing advice to the Forum member countries.

Q. Name a particular economic issue impacting the region that interests you, and why?

A. One particular issue is 'Labour Mobility', because it tends to benefit the Forum Island Countries significantly by providing income for the people of the Pacific, and contributing to the broader development of the Forum Island Countries. Some countries have started participating in regional schemes such as those in NZ and Australia, which mostly involves fruit picking and horticulture. There is a great demand for other sectors too by Australia and New Zealand which FICs can make use of to send people abroad to work and earn income for themselves and their families. This contributes to achieving the objectives of the Pacific Plan, which the Forum Leaders have outlined for the benefit of the Region.

Q. How do you think exposure to regional issues, in your capacity as a Young Professional will benefit your career?

A. Appreciating and understanding the issues affecting the region and gaining the exposure will help broaden my knowledge and help me to contribute to any organisation that I will be part of by applying that knowledge and sharing experiences. It will also help me to take on challenges that may come about with more confidence.

Q. Apart from work commitments, how do you plan to make the most of your time in Suva?

A. Apart from work, I try to enjoy as much as I can by socialising and getting to know people from different backgrounds, and visiting places that I've never been to around Viti Levu, the main Island.