

Health Challenges Posed by Climate Change in the Pacific

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Integrating Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management to
Protect Health and Build Resilience in Pacific Islands

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Outline

- General characteristics of Pacific Island Countries
- Health challenges posed by climate change
- Other challenges

Surrounded by the
vast Pacific Ocean

3 Sub-regions

Malnesia

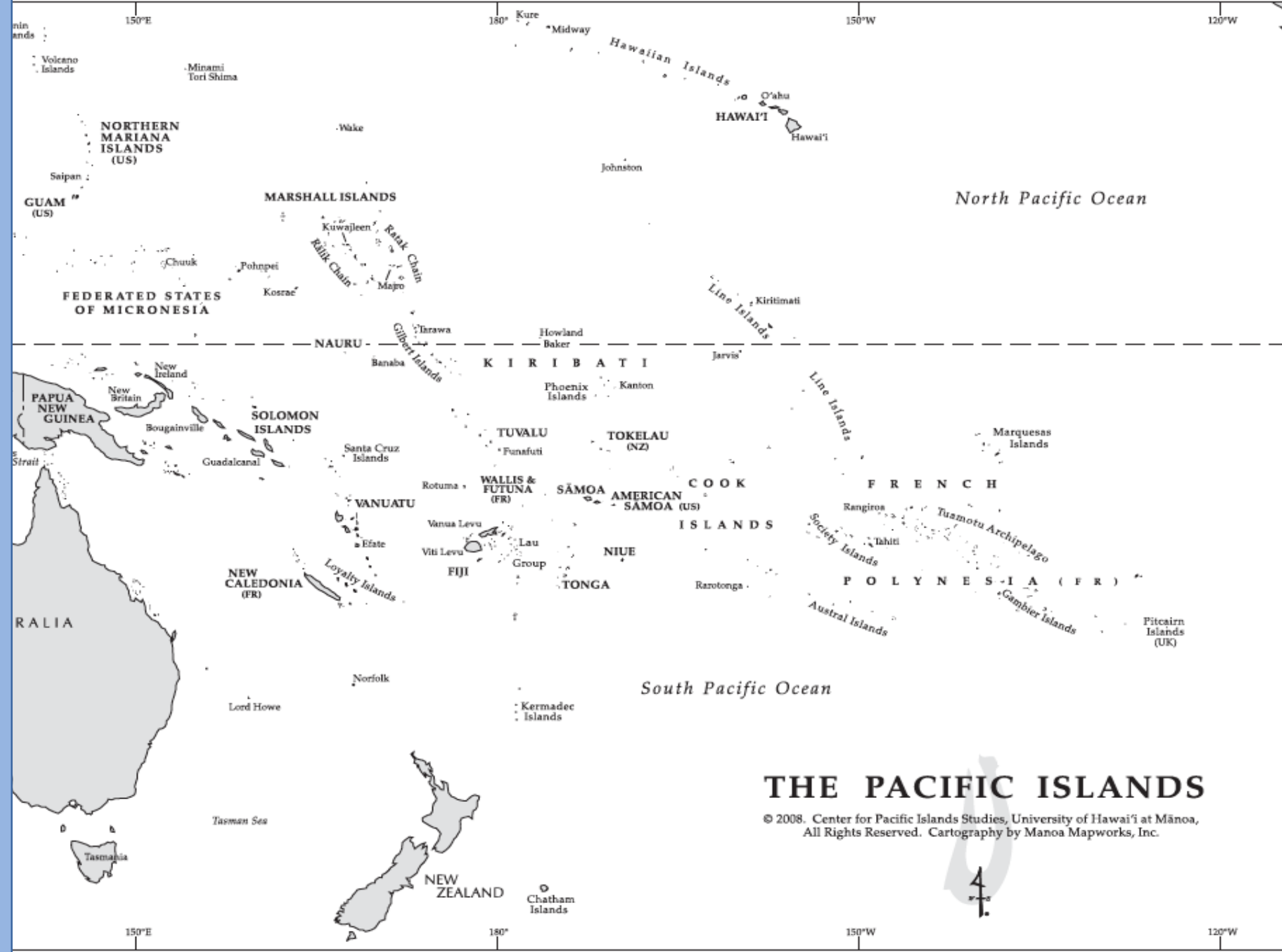
Micronesia

Polynesia

Small but many
islands

Distant and far

Volcanic, raised
coral, atolls







Livelihood depend on resources of the sea and land:

- Fish and seafood
- Root crops
- Fruits and vegetables
- Fresh water
- Imported processed food



Climate Change and Health

- **First Meeting on Climate Variability and Change (2000)**
- **Health Ministers Meeting in Madang, PNG (2009)**
 - Recognized that PICs were vulnerable to climate change and identified several high priority, climate sensitive health-risks common throughout the region:
 - Vector-borne diseases
 - Water-borne diseases/water security
 - Food-borne diseases/food security
 - Injuries and deaths from extreme weather events
 - Compromised food security and malnutrition
 - Mental health impacts of loss of livelihoods and climate change- induced population displacements

Climate Change and Health

- **Health Ministers Committed to Action on CC & Health and Recommended each PIC to:**
 - Plan and implement studies on HVA due to CC
 - Develop national strategies and action plans
 - Increase awareness among policy and decision makers about the impacts of CC on health
 - Mobilize communities to better adapt to the health consequences of CC
 - Strengthen national capacity to develop and implement effective interventions to minimize climate-related health risks
 - Etc
- **HVA were carried out in 12 PICs in 2010-2012 resulting in development of NCCHAP**

Climate Change and Health

- **The highest priority climate-sensitive health risks in Pacific island countries include:**
 - trauma from extreme weather events;
 - heat-related illnesses;
 - compromised safety and security of water and food (food and water-borne diseases);
 - vector-borne diseases;
 - zoonoses;
 - respiratory illnesses;
 - psychosocial ill health;
 - non-communicable diseases;
 - population pressures; and,
 - health system deficiencies

Climate Change and Health

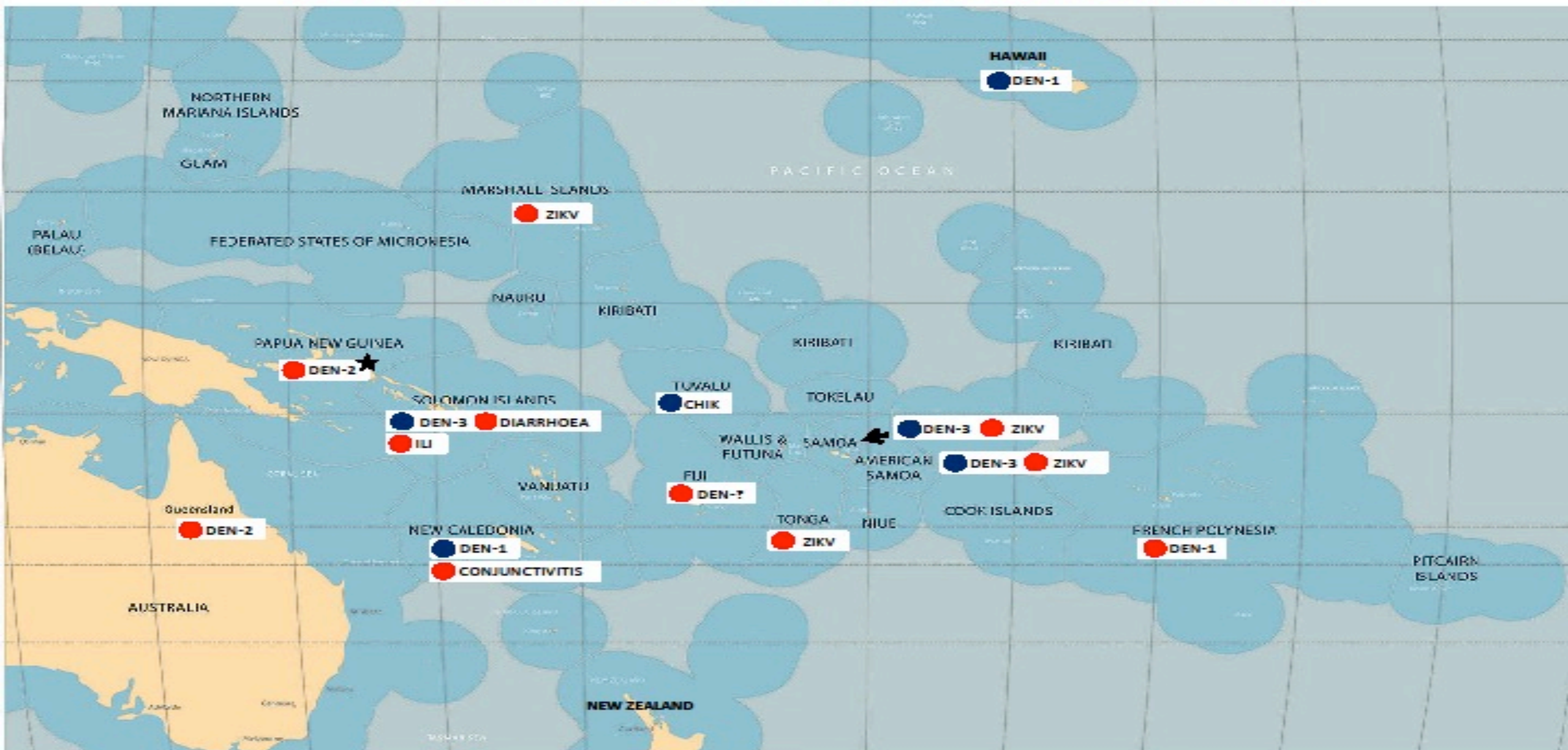
- **Likely effects of climate change on key health issues**

- Respiratory infections
- Skin diseases
- Poverty, socio-economic disadvantages
- Traumatic injuries and deaths
- Typhoid
- Ciguatera (fish poisoning, harmful algal blooms), turtle poisoning, scombroid (histamine) poisoning
- Eye disease
- Filariasis
- Malaria

Main climate-sensitive health issues in PICs

Country*	Main climate-sensitive health issues**
Cook Islands	Dengue fever, diarrhoeal disease
Federated States of Micronesia	Water- and mosquito-borne diseases, malnutrition
Fiji	Dengue fever, typhoid fever, leptospirosis, diarrhoeal disease
Kiribati	Food (safety, security, food-borne diseases), water (safety, security, water-borne diseases) and vector-borne diseases
Nauru	Air quality, food security, non-communicable diseases (NCDs)
Niue	Vector-borne diseases, ciguatera, diarrhoeal disease, respiratory disease, heat-related illness, NCDs, trauma from extreme weather events
Palau	Vector-borne diseases, zoonotic infections, gastroenteritis, respiratory disease, NCDs, trauma from extreme weather events, mental health issues
Republic of the Marshall Islands	Food-, water- and vector-borne (dengue) diseases, respiratory diseases, malnutrition
Solomon Islands	Vector-borne diseases (malaria), respiratory diseases
Tonga	Diarrhoeal diseases, vector-borne diseases (dengue), food security/nutrition, non-communicable diseases, injuries and deaths from extreme weather events
Tuvalu	Diarrhoeal disease, respiratory disease, compromised food security and impacts on NCD's
Vanuatu	Food- and water-borne diseases

Epidemic and emerging disease alerts in the Pacific region as at 29 February 2016



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

for the Pacific Public
Health Surveillance
Network (PPHSN)

Legend



- Cases reported are increasing or peaking.
- Cases reported are decreasing or circulation is ongoing.
- Awaiting confirmation of aetiology.
- No update provided for at least two weeks.

DEN: Dengue
ZIKV: Zika virus

CHIK: Chikungunya
ILI: Influenza-like-illness

Other health challenges

- Shortage of human resources for health
- Incomplete/limited health data/ information systems
- Small population spread over vast area
- Burden of ill health (NCDs)
- Finance and resources
- Territories

Other health challenges

- Vulnerability of low lying outer islands/ coastal areas to
 - Cyclones
 - Floods
 - Storm surges
 - Sea level rise, and
 - Disturbances in water supply caused by drought or salination of aquifers
- Vulnerability of health facilities
- Limited awareness of the health risks of climate variability and change
- Insufficient data and monitoring of climate-sensitive health impacts and risk
- Insufficient integration of climate and disaster risks into health sector policy
- Poor coordination across ministries and departments on the health risks of climate change
- Limited transportation services to outer islands populations and other remote parts of the region

Thank you