



**MINUTES**  
**PANG Strategic Planning Meeting**  
**10-11<sup>th</sup> November 2006, PIANGO Meeting Room, Suva.**

**Present:**

Feiloakitau Kaho Tevi (Interim Chairperson)  
Cema Bolabola  
Claire Slatter  
Father Kevin Barr  
Mikaele Bulavakarua  
Roshni Sami (Coordinator)  
Helene Tuitakali (Researcher)  
Virisila Buadromo (10.30 onwards)  
Suliana Siwatibau  
Isikeli Mataitoga (11am-12.30pm)

**DAY ONE**

**History of PANG – Stanley Simpson absent**

**Neoliberal Globalisation – Father Barr (see hand out)**

Overall, Father Barr sought to argue for the importance of retaining a 'big picture' perspective, and therefore that PANG should situate its work in the context of neoliberal economic-globalisation, and not lose this to a more narrow focus on particular aspects of globalisation such as trade issues.

In his presentation Father Barr discussed:

- The history of economic globalisation drawing parallels between liberalism as it emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and neoliberalism as it has emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- The social response to nascent capitalism in the form of liberalism helped it to evolve into "capitalism with a human face"
- how neo-liberalism had broken and undermined many of these aspects of social-liberalism and Keynesian economics such as the phasing out of social welfare policies and emergent attitudes critical of welfare dependency.

In discussion following the presentation it was agreed that

- PANG should frame its work as through economic-globalisation, but that in the current Pacific context a focus on trade for the next three to five years was necessary given the fast pace, wide-reaching impact and binding nature of trade agreements and negotiations.
- PANG's work to focus on demystifying economic policy and trade policy to make it accessible to Pacific Island people and to assist them to understand how it has impacted their lives, and how negotiations under agreement would impact their lives.
- PANG should have a proactive agenda on issues so it is not just responsive. Therefore PANG needs a long term strategy.
- Early intervention and advocacy is important to assist in opening up policy space for alternatives, as well as work with other NGOs and help ensure that awareness on the impact of trade agreements is incorporated into their agendas.
- PANG should lobby on government process in relation to trade, to make trade agreements more democratic.

## Pacific Trade Policy and Negotiations - Isikeli Mataitoga

Isikeli Mataitoga was invited to speak on:

- Government perspective on trade policy
- Identifying areas of importance for PANG's work
- How PANG can best work with the government on trade issues

Mr Mataitoga discussed a range of points including that

- The **WTO** is just a rule making organisation, it can't address trade related problems. The only way to better democratise it is through pressure from organisations such as NGOs. The WTO must have a wide review.
- **Fiji must engage**, we are an open and small economy that is 80% export driven, around 60-80% of money used day to day is earned overseas, it's an agrarian society with people barely walking out of poverty.
  - Because there is insufficient information from the ministry of agriculture as a negotiator Mataitoga does not have information on production in terms of scale and sector that is required for him to effectively negotiate. A key problem is with the Ministry of Agriculture's ability to do empirical analysis.
- **Sugar** – the sugar protocol prevented the efficient development of the sugar industry. It was too generous and given for too long (Fiji was selling at 32c when the world market was between 16-7c) Currently Fiji sells at 15c and the world market is 11c. ? No one in Fiji can sell at 11c and make a profit. The problem with addressing sugar is that it is deeply embedded as a political issue rather than an economic issue.

[check figures]

- **Supply side Constraints** is a main barrier for Fiji: human resources, planning (of crops) and qualitative production (?). For example Punja's started production in cassava chips and now they don't have enough supply of cassava in Fiji and applied for an import licence to get cassava from the Phillipines. Similarly with yagona, Fiji has to import it from Vanuatu and PNG.
- **WTO special products** is a solution Fiji is pushing in the WTO. Measurement for categorisation as a special product are: small economy, with balance of payment problems, reliant on the product, pervasiveness and use of income of the product.
- **Other sectors** – Fisheries (aquaculture and mariculture), forestries, comm.(?)
- Shifting to **niche crops** (such as...) is high risk for small farmers as they don't have knowledge and 'technology' in growing those crops and if the market collapses they lose their incomes, as they can't as easily switch to alternative local markets.
  - It is safer for local growers to stick to crops they can produce will and for government to direct FDI into niche crops, so investors carry the risk.
- **Food security** is marginalised in trade liberalisation. The logic of trade liberalisation is that the economy should specialise at what it does best, and import products and services that it cannot supply as efficiently as others. In Fiji this has been to the detriment of our food security.
- **Role of PANG**
  - Get involved in trade negotiations in discussion leading up to negotiations
  - Ngos are powerful because of the linkages that they have.
  - NGOs need to get people to understand what trade negotiations are about.
  - A focus area should be doing research on how policy will impact the poor, as this is a government weakness.
  - NGOs must be made a formal partner with government in trade negotiations.
  - They must critique some of the concessions government is making especially in services (utilities, health and education)
  - They must be critical of why we're even going down this road – using this strategy.
  - "We have to lean to surf this tide"
- **Bilateral with Australia**
  - Will begin as an MOU
  - Australia is an important partner 60% of engagement in trade is with Australia
  - They own the entire financial services sector
  - We must also try to bring in interest from other players including China and India.
  - Pacific Plan – trade and economic cooperation agreement
  - Market access
  - Fish is the biggest difference between PACP countries
  - Leave goods out of EPA
  - Labour mobility
  - Aus cares about being the kudos of being the sheriff of the Pacific
  - International reputation
  - Wkg group small is ec – Doha
  - Enhance special differential treatment
- **The Pacific Plan** is a trade and economic cooperation agreement.
- Of the 14 PACP countries five countries have goods to trade = 4 MSG countries (SI, PNG, Fiji, Vanuatu)
- Fisheries is actually the biggest difference between countries.
- If goods are left out of the EPA and are annexed there is nothing substantial left
  - As an opt-in annex this will give smaller countries the flexibility they need in the agreement.
  - [However we criticise this perspective in that services and TRIPS will also be very significant for the Pacific's trading relationship with the EU)

## Gender and Trade

Virisila Buadromo will tell the story of the FWRM Gender and Trade project, the rationale underlying the project and why FWRM chose to set up a Gender and Trade project and what activities will form part of this project.

- FWRM's Gender and Trade project grew out of work done by Claire Slatter and Atu Emberson-Bain on labour legislation, FWRM and unions lobbied on the Industrial Relations Bill which was later replaced by the Employment Relations Bill.
- Later Atu Emberson-Bain completed a further study called "Fishing for Justice" on Pafco, which led to debate in Fiji's Parliament.
- Claire Slatter and Atu Emberson-Bain lobbied FWRM to look at trade more, and a programme looking at the affect of trade liberalisation on women was launched in 1992.
- PANG was commissioned to do research on the sugar and garment industry.
- FWRM is now looking at jointly presenting the findings with PANG through a national consultation. However the information is outdated.
- FWRM is looking to continue it's relationship with PANG, especially through informing PANG's work with a gender perspective.

Discussion then followed with the following points:

- Women at the community level don't understand themselves as economic actors. We need to go back to the community and do work on 'trade literacy' just like FWRM has done work on 'legal literacy'.
- We need to create a critical mass for literacy so that ordinary people can start asking the right questions of the government, and increase their engagement.
- FWRM will include gender and trade in their Young Women's Leadership programme.
- Idea of women writing their own stories to understand globalisation and trade liberalisation.
- Mention of the ECREA comic on globalisation.

## Group Brainstorming on PANG

Form two groups which will discuss and present their ideas on the following questions:

1. *What work should PANG focus on?*
2. *What strategies should we use?*
3. *What policies and structures should be put in place to ensure that PANG remains a well managed and sustainable organisation, networking and sharing experiences with others regionally and internationally.*

### Group 1:

Past Work:

TNCs, Trade Agreements, PACER, Investment, EPA Tracking, Gender and Trade, Rice Industry in Fiji, SAPs, Water privatisation, Drau-ni-salato Award, Trade Liberalisation on particular sectors.

Future Work:

Focus: EPA, PACER, Pacific Bilateral Trade Agreements

NB: We should always analyse from the PANG Globalisation framework, always make back and forward linkages in our statements.

Goal: Change contexts of Trade Agreements and build understanding to create change:

Research

- impact studies / baseline studies
- making the links between day-to-day life and trade agreements

Advocacy

- Facilitate regional networks
- Coordinating role for advocacy at a national level
- Trade Bulletin
- Website – recover old website data, refer to existing strategy in 3 month plan

Training and Public Education

- Four Part Programme with WCC
- Demystifying
- ONZ Materials (fact sheets, basics on economic neo-liberal globalisation and trade)

Drau-ni-salato Award

- Do one bad one good?
- potential to go regional
- e.g. Transparency International did for political parties

Policies and structures

- Constitution – clean up
- Admin Policy – collated and managed
- Sustainability of Organisation
  - o Seek alternative funding sources
- Staffing
  - o Coordinator
  - o Researcher
  - o Communications
  - o Part time Admin/Finance
- Annual Trade Focus Group meeting of SC, staff and activists
- Annual report and evaluation of work – SWOT analysis

### Group 2:

Over all goals: Network promoting economic justice in globalisation with specific concerns on:

Objectives:

- 1) Poverty eradication
- 2) Equitable (opportunities, access, impact) (gender/social/power aspect)
- 3) Accountability and transparency in policies
- 4) Food security
- 5) Environmental sustainability

Focal areas:

- 1) IECs on economic justice
- 2) Multi-/Bilateral trade agreements with specific focus on goods, services and investment
- 3) Development of Pacific Regional alternatives to neo-liberal policies

Strategies:

- 1) Research and analysis and publication
- 2) Public education and awareness
- 3) Policy dialogue with government and regulatory bodies
- 4) Promoting and advocating Pacific positions through international/regional networks
- 5) Ensure sustainable organisation capacity building.

**Matters Arising (End of Day Discussion)**

- Coordinator to write a letter confirming Tupou Vere and PCRC's withdrawal from PANG as trustee and SC member respectively
- PANG to begin collating Pacific research on trade related issues.

## **DAY TWO**

### **Present:**

Feiloakitau Kaho Tevi (Interim Chairperson)  
Cema Bolabola  
Claire Slatter  
Father Kevin Barr  
Mikaele Bulavakarua  
Roshni Sami (Coordinator)  
Helene Tuitakali (Researcher)  
Suliana Siwatibau

### **Debrief from Friday Workshop**

#### **Discussion of Key Priorities**

#### **Drafting of Strategic Plan**

-- See paper: 2007-2009 PANG Strategy

### **Matters Arising**

- Claire Slatter declined nomination as Chairperson
- Fei Tevi to remain Chairperson to the end of 2007
- Suliana Siwatibau invited to join PANG Steering Committee and she accepted.