****

**Joint Media Release**

**Regional workshop puts human rights at the heart of Pacific environmental action**

(**22 August 2022 – Suva, Fiji**) - Representatives from four national human rights institutions (NHRIs) will meet in Nadi, Fiji, this week to develop proposals for national activities that give substance to the recently-adopted UN resolution on the right to healthy environment.

NHRI representatives – from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Samoa – will also discuss approaches for collaborating on this work with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, (PIFS), Pacific Community (SPC) and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

The three-day workshop will build on previous discussions held as part of an online learning program for NHRIs on human rights and the environment.

Dr. Erja ASKOLA, the Chargee d’Affaires at the Delegation of the European Union for the Pacific is expected to deliver the opening remarks, highlighting the EU’s strong commitment to protecting human rights and addressing climate change.

“PIF leaders have long recognised that climate change is the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific,” said Kieren Fitzpatrick, Director of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF).

“In responding to climate change and leading on sustainable development across the Pacific, NHRIs can contribute to PIF’s agenda by bridging the gap between communities, civil society and government and advising on approaches that safeguard human rights.”

The workshop, to be held from 23-25 August 2022, will discuss human rights-based approaches to respond to environmental and climate change issues, including the promotion and protection of the right to a healthy environment.

The workshop will be facilitated by Mr Romulo Nayacalevu, the APF’s Lead Engagement Facilitator for the Pacific, and include a presentation (via Zoom) by Dr Ian Fry, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change.

Ms Karen Gomez-Dumpit, former Commissioner with the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) of the Philippines, will provide an overview of a ground-breaking inquiry conducted by the CHR on human rights and climate change, which focused on the impact of major carbon polluters.

Participants will also develop proposals for national activities that promote the right to a healthy environment, such as research or community engagement initiatives, with two projects selected to receive funding.

Following completion of the national activity, NHRIs will share their analysis with the PIFS, SPC and SPREP in upcoming information exchanges to discuss measures that best respond to the issues identified.

The workshop is part of a two-year project to [promote engagement between NHRIs and regional inter-governmental mechanisms](https://www.asiapacificforum.net/support/what-we-do/international-regional-advocacy/regional-mechanisms/collaboration-nhris-igms/) to address human rights issues in South-East Asia and the Pacific, and is funded by the European Union and coordinated by the APF.

**For more information, please contact:**
Huong Tran

Project Manager, APF

Email: huongtran@asiapacificforum.net