

## SPOTLIGHT ON R2P



### APR2P workshops at PIANGO regional meeting

#### PIANGO regional meeting – APR2P workshops

On 25-26 October, the APR2P Centre joined the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO) at their annual regional meeting in Nadi, Fiji.

Made up of National Liaison Units (NLUs), PIANGO is the umbrella body representing the non-government sector in the region. At the meeting, NLU Executive Directors and PIANGO Board members explored linkages between their strategic priorities and the PIFS 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, including on issues with relevance to R2P and atrocity prevention.

On the first day, R2P Pacific Director Romulo Nayacalevu, presented to NLU Executive Directors on R2P in the Pacific context. Among the discussion were human rights frameworks and institutionalisation, definitions of atrocity crimes, risk assessment and early warning, and the support from Pacific nations for R2P at the UN General Assembly.

FCOSS Executive Director Vani Catanasiga presented on the commu-

nity observation program used by the organisation - an early warning system for humanitarian issues. She explained how community generated data is used and how such a system relates to human rights, and could be expanded to provide early warning for conflict or atrocities. The role of the NGO sector and NLUs like FCOSS was highlighted, as was the advocacy work by FCOSS and other organisations in Fiji on atrocity prevention. She also spoke about the involvement of local justice actors, youth, and the importance of collaboration.

A second workshop was held with both executive staff and PIANGO board members. Atrocity Prevention Coordinator Nikki Marczak presented on the role of human rights and NGO actors in atrocity prevention, and Romulo Nayacalevu emphasised the connections between R2P and PIANGO priorities including climate change and environmental protection (deep sea mining, nuclear waste), and regional security. He gave a detailed briefing on regional protection systems around the world, National Human Rights In-

stitutions in the Pacific, legal frameworks and international humanitarian and human rights law.

In developing their statement to the PIFS leaders meeting in Cook Islands in November 2023, PIANGO identified the R2P agenda as a priority for the NGO sector, and “urged our Leaders to integrate atrocity prevention and R2P in its implementation strategy, in relation to issues such as peacebuilding, human rights, gender-based violence, climate change and environmental protection, and regional security.”

The PIANGO meeting statement highlighted that “Civil Society recognises that all countries have risk factors for atrocity crimes including war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing, and sees the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as a lens for guiding “human and environmental security policy that protects the lives of Pacific peoples”.

The statement also highlighted that climate change can exacerbate existing risks of violent conflict and atrocities, and that that gender in-



equality is a risk factor for atrocity crimes, saying “Civil Society notes particular concerns in our region such as: human rights abuses and the potential for further atrocities in West Papua; ecocide especially via natural resource exploitation, deep-sea mining, and nuclear waste pollution; election-related violence and displacement; tribal massacres and sorcery accusation related violence; violence against women; and transnational crime.”

In addition, PIANGO said it “supports early warning early response principles for identifying risk factors and a collaborative approach to mitigating triggers for atrocity crimes, and believes this is an important element of regional security, echoing principles of collaboration in the Boe and Biketawa Declarations.”

Finally, PIANGO’s statement reminded Pacific Leaders of the importance of National Human Rights Institutions and embedding human rights frameworks into domestic legislation and regional policy.

The partnership between PIANGO and the APR2P Centre will continue, with further in depth training and workshops in planning.

## Awareness and Socialising of R2P Dinner

PIANGO’s Executive Director Si-ale Ilohahia welcomed Fiji’s Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources The Hon Filimoni Vosarogo and his wife, Mrs Sera Vosarogo to a special dinner event where the Minister addressed PIANGO staff and Board members.

He reiterated Prime Minister Rabuka’s aspiration of a “zone of peace” in the Pacific saying that “necessarily encompasses the prevention of violence, conflict, and atrocity crimes”, and said the government also views R2P as a vehicle to advance the Forward Fiji Declaration, signed earlier this year in an historic commitment to peace and democracy. “This government, in its declaration of support for democracy and the rule of law, acknowledges the disunity and violence of the past and commits to working against racism and move towards respect for fellow humans and mutual awareness that whatever seems to unite us is far stronger than what appears to divide.”

The Hon Minister said his government “recognises and appreciates the crucial role played by NGOs and civil societies in facilitating community harmony, advocating on regional issues, including climate change, regional security and human rights. These issues are not just NGO issues, they are issues of the entire Pacific and Pacific governments because without a voice to it, the region cannot advance our common humanity or protect our common security.”

Speaking on the commitment Pacific nations have expressed for R2P, Minister Vosarogo said “With sovereignty comes responsibility, and the commitments made to regional cooperation as part of the Boe and Biketawa Declarations, for example, are entirely consistent with the concept of R2P.”

In line with Fiji’s leadership role on atrocity prevention in the Pacific, the Minister said, “The Government of Fiji is working to build strong partnership with the NGO and CSO sector in this country, and to work together to achieve these noble R2P objectives.”

The Centre recognises the leadership role of The Hon Minister Vosarogo in furthering the discussion of R2P in Fiji and for his support in socialising R2P within the existing Fijian government frameworks.



### ASIA PACIFIC CENTRE FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

School of Political Science & International Studies

The University of Queensland, St Lucia Brisbane QLD 4072

P +61 7 3346 6435

E: [r2pinfo@uq.edu.au](mailto:r2pinfo@uq.edu.au)