

The Road to the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, 2003

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1. Background of the Forum

Palau is one of the world's truly spectacular scuba diving locates, with coral reefs, blue holes, hidden caves and tunnels and over 60 vertical drop-offs. It's the meeting place of three major ocean currents, which bring abundant food supplies and an enormous variety of marine life to the area. The waters surrounding the Rock Islands literally teem with over 1500 varieties of reef and pelagic fish and more than four times the number of coral species than is found in the Caribbean. The region's spectacular underwater biodiversity includes over 1500 species of fish and 700 species of coral. This is typical impression about Palau and the Pacific region, which people in Japan and other countries have.

However, the difficulty that the Pacific region faces and its vulnerability are totally beyond our expectation. In reality, many people in the pacific region rely on the rainfall cultivation, but precipitation itself is unstable as shown in Figure.1. Topological feature such as low coral atoll and limestone island, of this region make it impossible to construct large-scale reservoirs to secure water in dry season. Moreover, the particular vulnerability of islands is often described in term of small size, remoteness and exposure to climatic change and instability.

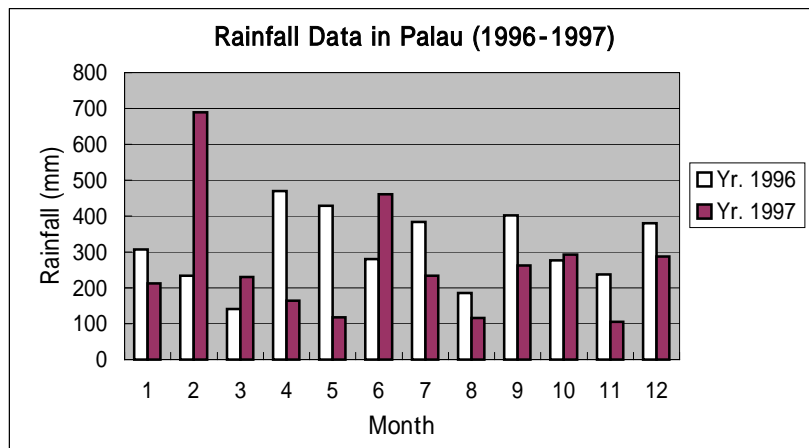


Figure 1. Rainfall Data in Palau (1996-1997)

In these days, the issues and difficulties caused from its uniqueness, climatic changes and global warming have received increasing attention from the researchers, especially climatologists and meteorologists, citizens and medias round the world. However, there is no time to wait for the assistance from the other side of the world. The pacific island has to make

action for own future and propose the possible countermeasures by themselves within the context of the sustainable development. This paper summarizes the particular issues in the Pacific Island countries at first, and then highlights the main objective of this forum and the strategy, which the member of the executive committee share with.

2. Overview of the Issues in the Pacific Island Countries.

In general, the water and energy issues in the Pacific Islands countries and the impact of the global warming are summarized in Figure 2. The roots of these problems can be categorized in topological uniqueness, overpopulation, inadequate water resource management, climatic instability and climatic change, etc. Even though most of issues are caused somehow from its topological and geological uniqueness, the impact of the climatic change makes existing issues more serious and complicated.

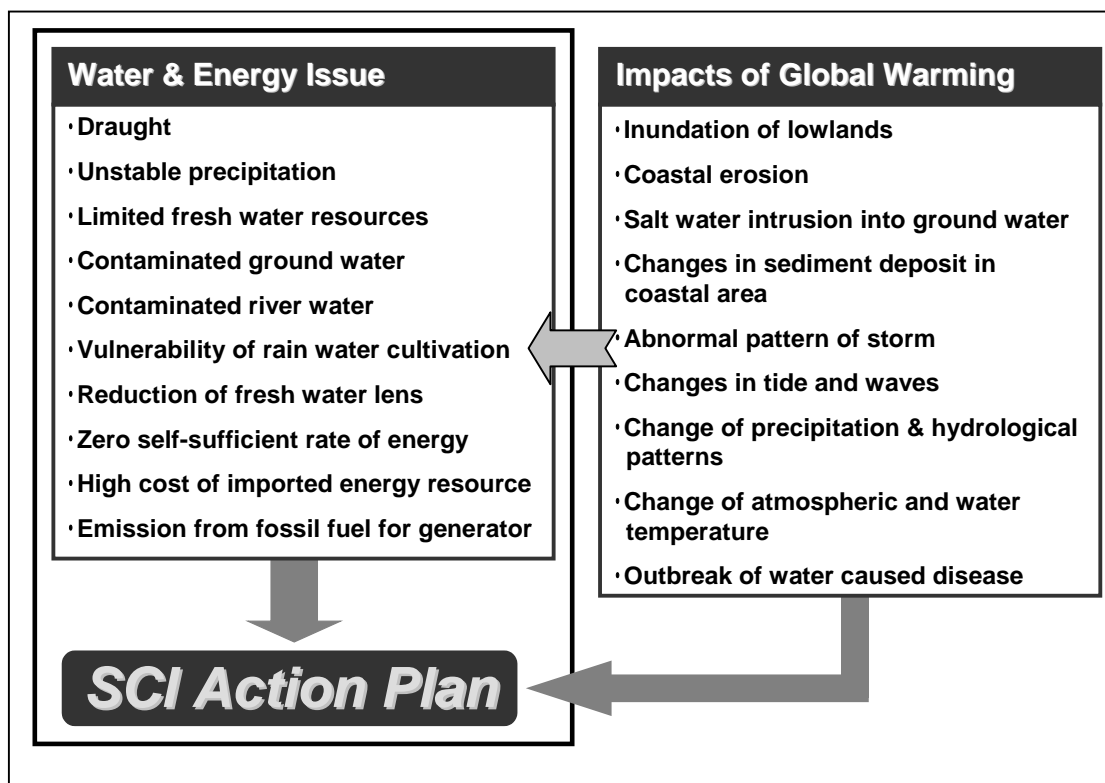


Figure 2. Summary of Issue and Impact in the Pacific Island Countries.

In this decade, the water and energy issues, as shown in Figure 2, have received the attention and have been addressed throughout the various symposiums and conferences in many levels. Within the context of the identification of the issues and causes, the first action was succeeded, but it does not mean enough. Therefore, sharing the strategy and the issues, it is the time to act for the detail countermeasures based on the world wide or regional partnerships with

common recognition. For this purpose, this forum is organized as a first step for next decade, especially to bring the Pacific Voice towards the 3rd World Water Forum, Kyoto 2003.

3. SCI Action Plan

SCI Action Plan is based on the concept that water and energy issue and climatic change should be treated simultaneously. Moreover, public awareness in the different levels around the world is also key aspect to take the action to another level. From this point of view, the action should be taken to each three factor. Three major slogans are explained briefly.

SCI Action Plan

- **Struggle against Global Warming**
- **Challenge to Water & Energy Issue**
- **Integration of Pacific Voice to Kyoto**

(A) Struggle against Global Warming

Each island country has various water and energy issues. A common characteristic is that many island countries could be greatly influenced by the environmental change in global scale as mentioned before. Therefore, our group has to consider and discuss on what kind of actions should be taken to overcome the global warming, which are the root of many issues, for the survival in island countries.

(B) Challenge to Water & Energy Issue

In the island countries, the natural and human resources are limited. If the person has ever heard of the problems in island countries, it might be easy to image the peculiar “blockage feeling” about the water and the energy issues there. Therefore, our group wants to act and challenge to this complicated issue from slightly different angle from existing techniques and projects. Our basic thought of the action is the development and promotion of desalination technology using renewable energy. The reason why we choose this approach is that the pacific island countries have the highest potential for the renewable energy such as wind, solar and ocean thermal energy in the world. Pacific islands have to use this advantage to be eco-friendly countries prior to the world and overcome the difficulties they face and expected in near future.

(C) Integration of Pacific Voice to Kyoto

Based on the concept explained above, our group will hold Palau forum and Saga forum as

the next step before Kyoto main forum. In the sequence of forums, the partnership between the island countries would be enhanced. At the same time, researchers and engineers will participate also from other countries, such as Japan, to build practical partnership.

As you know, the attention to the Pacific issues is increasing year by year, but the voice from the Pacific islands is still small and the information is limited for the people in other part of the world. Therefore, within this working group starting from Palau, the regional forum should be continuously held every 3 or 4 years after 3rd WWF Kyoto to increase the public awareness and to prepare for pilot project in this region. Through the continuous discussion, we hope that the delegations of each country and other participants will draw an imaginary of society in the future to set up the concrete targets through the free discussion in the round-table conferences.

4. Road to Kyoto

To integrate the Pacific Voice in term with SCI Action Plan, we plan the process shown below including Palau forum. Key point is how to organize new framework and to agree with the concrete numerical target towards the pilot project. Through this process, we aim to appeal the Pacific issues and targets to the world and to propose how to act towards the sustainable water and energy in this region.

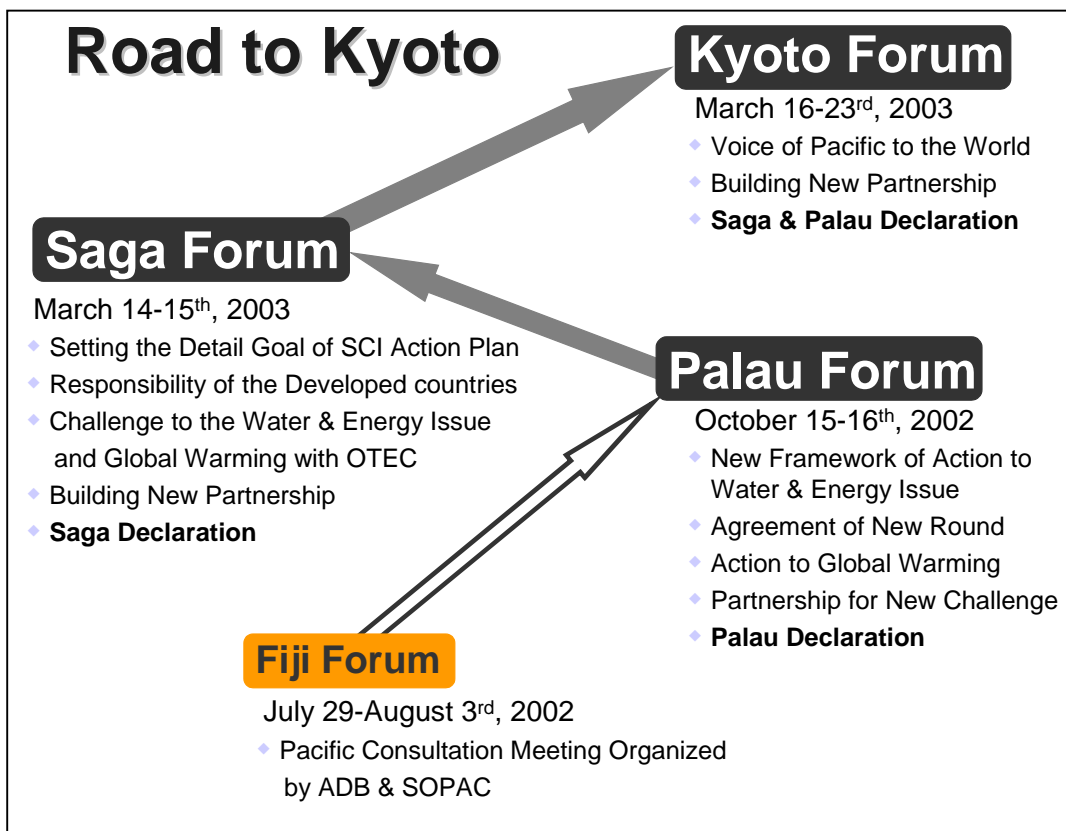


Figure 3. The Road to Kyoto