

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### WHERE IS THE PATHWAY TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN THE PACIFIC?

Despite some positive developments, food security in Pacific Island countries is facing escalating threats from climate change, with frequent extreme weather, sea level rise, and resource scarcity. Enhancing climate resilience for food and nutrition security will require integrated policies and greater stakeholder collaboration to overcome challenges including limited infrastructure, restricted access to finance, and information gaps.

This was the key message of **Professor Graham Sem**, Environmental Science & Geography Discipline Lead at the University of PNG in his overview address at Australia's key food security event. The Crawford Fund annual conference, *Progress and Prospects for Climate-Resilient Agrifood Systems: Actionable Recommendations for Policymakers and Practitioner* is to be held in Parliament House, Canberra on 11-12 August.

Speakers from around the globe and Australia will offer their solutions for transforming agrifood systems in response to climate change, addressing the trade-offs between food production and net-zero targets, pursuing sustainable intensification, and promoting inclusivity and equity.

Professor Sem has examined the evolving landscape of climate resilience within the agrifood systems of Pacific Island countries, where agriculture, fisheries, transportation, and food distribution networks are deeply interconnected and highly vulnerable to climate change.

"Pacific Island agrifood systems - spanning smallholder crop and livestock production, subsistence and semi-commercial fishing, food processing, and marketing - are facing escalating threats from more frequent extreme weather, sea level rise, and resource scarcity," said Professor Sem, who is a leading figure in climate change adaptation, environmental conservation, and sustainable development.

Professor Sem's address highlighted regional case studies drawn from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

"My analysis highlights how climate-smart agriculture, local innovations, and strengthened institutional collaboration are not only helping to safeguard production but also ensuring that food supply chains, market access, and rural livelihoods remain viable under changing climatic conditions," he said.

"Australia-Pacific Partnerships on climate resilience and agrifood systems are helping Pacific Island countries adapt to climate change by providing technical support, funding and expertise on climate-smart agriculture, food security and disaster preparedness. They are also strengthening market access for farmers, promoting sustainable development practices across sectors and supporting governments to integrate climate science into their policies and projects for long-term climate resilient development."

"What are needed are evidence-based interventions, such as crop diversification, extension services, and improved value chain connectivity, need to be scaled up for a more adaptive and inclusive agrifood sector. Despite positive developments, significant challenges persist, such as underdeveloped infrastructure, limited agrifood financing, and challenges in knowledge-sharing across the region."

"Action is needed to strengthen the agrifood system's adaptive capacity. Pacific Island countries need integrated policies, investment in resilient infrastructure, and multistakeholder engagement to achieve sustainable food security and resilient rural economies in the midst of ongoing climate pressures," he concluded.

