

# **Globalization, Human Dimensions and Environmental Change in the South Pacific Island Nations**

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## **Abstract**

The process of globalization is having a far-reaching impact on small island states in the South Pacific Island Nations (SPINs). Trade liberalization and the structural changes to the economies are having a significant impact on the livelihoods of rural and poor people in these countries. It is also affecting the environment in a number of ways. The human dimension of global environmental change is a major issue at the global level. However, at the local level, the human-induced environmental degradation is a matter for concern. The SPINs should seriously consider the human-induced environmental degradation and include them in their environmental policies.

Keywords: globalization, human dimensions, South Pacific Island Nations

## **Introduction**

Globalization presents many challenges and problems to the small island states of the South Pacific as it does to many other smaller developing countries around the world. Trade liberalization is the main cornerstone of the global economic integration strategy. For small island nations in the South Pacific, the challenge is to position themselves in the global economic environment and reap the benefits of free trade. However, together with trade liberalization and the issue of how countries could benefit from globalization, there is increasing concern about the impact of globalization on the environment and how the human dimensions of environmental change is ignored in the whole process. This article discusses some of the concerns regarding the process of globalization and its impact on the environment. It also discusses the human dimensions of the process of globalization and environmental change and how this may affect the environment at the national and local levels in the South Pacific Island nations (SPINs). At a regional level, there is too much concern about regional issues and international issues and some of the issues regarding environmental damage at the local level and through human activities are being neglected. Regional organizations such as the Forum Secretariat and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) are too concerned with global and regional environmental changes such as climate change, international whaling issues and global warming, that some of the immediate issues are left behind. Particularly important are the anthropogenic causes of environmental degradation and how people perceive their contribution to the management and conservation of the environment at the local level. The human dimensions of environmental degradation needs to be taken into account and policies designed must take into account the activities of people at the local level.

SPINs are a diverse group of countries with diverse cultures, language and level of economic development. The way in which globalization and trade liberalization may

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