

DRI Dialogue Series: Building Resilience of Infrastructure in Atoll Nations

Dialogue 1: Strengthening Infrastructure Resilience to Climate Risks in Atoll Nations

09-July-2025

8:00 AM (**Maldives**) | 8.30 AM (**India**) | 11.00 AM (**Philippines**) | 3.00 PM (**Fiji & Marshall Islands**)

Context

The atoll nations in the Indo – Pacific region, namely Kiribati, Maldives, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu face existential climate adaptation challenges in the form of land loss, coastal erosion and ecosystem degradation, because of rising extreme sea levels (UNDP, 2022¹; SPREP, 2014²). Infrastructure in atoll nations is often not designed to withstand extreme events because of cost constraints and limited technical expertise. Projections indicate that sea levels could rise by approximately 6 inches by 2050³, causing land loss, coastal erosion, and ecosystem degradation thus endangering critical infrastructure and livelihoods. With uncertain patterns, intensity and frequency of climatic events, infrastructure in these nations become inadequate to withstand extreme events, constrained by limited financial resources and technical expertise. Critical infrastructure assets such as telecommunications, power, roads, airports and ports, vital for emergency response and supply chains, are especially at risk.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the Asian Development Bank's through their critical infrastructure resilience initiatives and Triple A (Accelerating Atoll Adaptation) initiative respectively seek to foster dialogue, knowledge exchange, and investment in resilient infrastructure, focusing on practical solutions across sectors such as transport, energy, water, and telecommunications. These collaborative efforts aim to build long-term resilience, safeguard livelihoods, and ensure the sustainable development of atoll nations.

In recognition of this, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are collectively organizing a dialogue series focused on resilience in Atoll Nations. The series aims to foster collaboration and share knowledge to enhance the resilience of infrastructure and systems against climate-related hazards and other threats in the Indo-Pacific region Atoll Nations. The first dialogue in the series will focus on the topic of "Vulnerability and Resilience to Climate from an Infrastructure Perspective in Atoll Nations".

Panellists

- Zarak Khan, Director, Programmes & Initiatives, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
- Pek Chuan Gan, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Maldives (Maldives)
- Tokumitsu Kobayashi, Pacific Small Island Developing States Advisor, UNOPS (Marshall Islands)

¹ <https://www.undp.org/pacific/news/coalition-low-lying-atoll-nations-climate-change-gather-palau>

² <https://www.sprep.org/news/coalition-low-lying-atoll-nations-climate-change-cancc-known-global-early-warning-system>

³ <https://www.nasa.gov/earth/climate-change/nasa-analysis-shows-irreversible-sea-level-rise-for-pacific-islands/>

- Ramraj Narasimhan, Senior Director, Program Management & Technical Support, CDRI (Moderator)
- Arghya Sinha Roy, Director Climate Change, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department (CCSD), ADB (Opening Comments)
- Alessio Giardino, Senior Climate Change and Coastal Adaptation Specialist, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department (CCSD), ADB (Presenter)