



Pacific Conference of Churches

Moderator

Rev. Dr. Tevita Havea

General Secretary

Rev. Francois Pihaatae

G.P.O Box 208, Suva.

4 Thurston Street, Suva, Fiji

Tel: (679) 3311 277 / 3302332

Fax: (679) 3303 205

e-mail: pacific@pcc.org.fj

TOKATOKA DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE, DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE

14th- 17th September 2016

Tokatoka Resort, Nadi, Fiji Islands

“For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” (Romans 8: 22 – 23)

We as member churches of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) meeting in Nadi/Fiji for the Conference on Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Preparedness, convened by ACT Alliance and PCC, from 14th - 17th September 2016, in consideration of:

- Adverse impacts of climate change on the Pacific Islands and its people;
- Climate induced migration and forced displacement of our people as a human rights threat and their rights as indigenous land owners;
- National, regional and global climate change and disaster risk reduction policy frameworks;
- Existing Climate Action initiatives implemented by Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, formal and informal groups, regional and International Agencies working in the Pacific Region.

Reaffirm our commitment to address the threat of climate change, building on previous PCC declarations such as the 2009 Moana Declaration, as a community of Pacific Island Churches and in collaboration with the global fellowship of churches and their ministries.

We are deeply concerned by climate change impacts threatening our very survival in the Pacific, such as sea level rise and extreme weather events putting at risk lives, livelihoods, culture, identity and our communal way of life. Due to our geographical setting, our islands continue to be most exposed and therefore most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of anthropogenic climate change. We recognize that our communities are affected in various ways, increasingly suffering from more frequent and more intense climate change related disasters, and we urge for immediate action to minimize its direct impact.

We are particularly concerned by the risk of climate induced migration and losing our territories, already witnessing people forced to leave their lands as a result of climate change related sea level rise which infringes on their rights as indigenous landowners and their customary fishing rights and boundaries.

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We as churches play a unique role as first responders in emergency situations, due to our widespread presence throughout the entire Pacific Islands. Already using a maximum of resources at our disposal to respond to disasters, we recognize the need for being supported in enhancing our adaptive capacities to foster climate resilience of our communities and to better prevent the occurrences of manmade disasters and continuously develop effective natural disaster response plans for communities.

While welcoming the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Action and the Agenda 2030 as landmark global frameworks for action, which could lead the way to transformational development pathways, **we urge our governments to close the remaining gaps between international, national and in particular local level action**, hindering community based climate adaptation and risk management approaches, and the powerful role we as churches can play, in enrolling our full potentials in fostering resilience and overcoming poverty.

We fully acknowledge the potential of local knowledge and community strengths as important factors of more sustainable, climate resilient and zero emission development pathways, and at the same time, underline the facilitating role churches can play, being integral part of our Pacific communities.

We call for full consultation and due participation of our communities in national climate adaptation planning processes right from the very beginning, to fully take into account their potential, and to create a new culture of pro-active rather than reactive risk management, improving efficiency, protecting lives and livelihoods, and reducing economic and non-economic losses and damages. The engagement of members of the community includes the participation of all sub-groups of the community namely men, women and youth including minority groups within the community.

We consider our churches as equal partners in implementing the Sendai Framework for Action, the Paris Agreement and the Agenda 2030, calling on governments to fully recognize the role we can play and fully recognize the effectiveness of the church in the community in mobilizing community members when implementing DRR activities. Government must continuously provide necessary technical and monetary support it can dispense to assist in the implementation of this Framework.

We consider cooperation, capacity enhancement of churches and communities as well as adequate budget allocations within national budgets and international cooperation for climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction as critical for success and therefore urge governments and donors to take respective action.

To sustainably build our common future we call for the inclusion of climate change related action and disaster risk reduction in the educational curriculums for public and church run schools at all levels, including primary, secondary, tertiary, technical, non-formal education and theological colleges.

Action to address climate change must be taken at all levels, from local, national to global, based on science, fulfilling human rights, and undertaken in the spirit of justice, peace and solidarity

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In view of the post-Paris process, COP22 in Morocco, the 5th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Mexico in 2017, and other international negotiations hereafter, we call on the community of states to ambitiously implement the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Action and the Agenda 2030 to ensure that our islands and our people are protected from further sea level rise and climate induced disasters and losses, and that they can enjoy full life in dignity.

Emphasizing the particular relevance of COP22, to come from climate framework setting to action, we call on all governments:-

- To shape their National Determined Contributions and long term strategies in line with the 1.5°C limit of global average temperature increase;
- To elaborate and implement National Adaptation Plans in full accordance with the Paris Agreement and most vulnerable people's needs and rights;
- To provide the means of implementation required, to shift relevant financial flows towards transformational climate resilient zero carbon development pathways, and to fulfill the commitment of developed countries to provide at least 100 billion USD annually to developing countries for climate mitigation, adaptation, risk reduction and risk transfer, and to address climate induced loss and damage, starting with agreeing on a reliable financial roadmap towards the fulfillment of this obligation at COP22.

As leaders and representatives of member churches of the Pacific Conference of Churches, we commit ourselves:-

- To contextualize and bring the before mentioned international frameworks into action at community levels ensuring that it is workable and result oriented to allow for monitoring and evaluation.
- To further strengthen our commitment and our communities' capacity to enhance climate resilience, to improve emergency preparedness and to raise awareness on climate change;
- To network and magnify our voices through existing local, national, regional and global platforms;
- To effectively collaborate with governments and partners at global, regional and national levels, following the principles of good governance, transparency and accountability;
- To holding governments, donors and agencies accountable to commitments made;
- To work with our communities to adapt, embrace, preserve and share best practices and the transfer of local knowledge as communal responses to climate change and related disasters;
- To take seriously our prophetic responsibility to hold our governments accountable to God and the people, and continue to act as a conscience of the people;
- To ensure the continued and active engagement and participation of women, youth, children and minority groups in community based programs on Climate Action.

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