



Pacific Conference of Churches

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Friday 15th October, 2021

Dear Church Leaders, and members of the Blue Pacific family,

RE: PACIFIC CHURCHES DECLARATION TO COP26

Warm greetings from the Pacific Conference of Churches!

On behalf of our Ecological Stewardship and Climate Justice team and our Pacific Climate Justice for All Campaign, I submit the following declaration for our Pacific Churches.

Following on from the Faith and Science Declaration – this declaration has been prepared as part of the Climate Justice for All campaign in partnership with the Methodist Church in Britain, host country for this year's UNFCCC Climate Conference known as COP26.

This ecumenical declaration has been developed over 2 years of consultation with affected communities and stakeholders, including young people by Ms. Iemaima Vaai, who is our Ecumenical Enabler for Ecological Stewardship and Climate Justice and the Climate Justice for All Pacific Campaign worker. Her work was overseen by Ms. Frances Namoumou and myself.

Please do share this with your communities, partners and governments.

Please also pray for Iemaima and I as we make our way to COP26 to be among the few from the Pacific present in Glasgow to raise the prophetic voice from the Pacific.

Yours in Christian service,

James Shri Bhagwan (Rev)
General Secretary
Pacific Conference of Churches



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Pacific Churches' Call to COP26: "Securing a Future for our Pacific"

In the midst of the existential threat of the climate crisis on the people and biodiversity of the Pacific; the Pacific Household of God amplifies the groaning of creation and the cry of people who face the destruction of homes, of communities and nations across our blue Pacific. Confronted with the threat to identity, livelihood and sovereignty, we draw on our spirituality and indigenous knowledge and life-affirming traditional values as a source of our resilience and hope in such adversity.

Scientific evidence has unequivocally proven the climate crisis continues to exacerbate at an alarming rate. As COP26 aims to secure global net zero and keep 1.5 degrees within reach, we must also recognize that every fraction of an increase to warming temperatures also places our Pacific communities at a much higher risk of being swallowed by rising sea levels. Through this we therefore reaffirm our commitments towards securing a sustainable future for our land, our people and our diverse cultures.

As members of the regional ecumenical family, we declare that our Pacific leaders use their climate realities to display leadership in international climate change dialogue and decision making. We must fight for our future and ensure that the upcoming COP26 conference **prioritises and protects the rights of present and future generations** against the adverse effects of climate change.

We call on our national leaders to reaffirm their commitments in our collective fight for climate justice. Ensuring severely affected indigenous **communities are provided with the right tools needed for a just recovery**, provided that individuals are mobilised with proper adaptation measures for a swift response to the impacts.

We call on our church leaders to **utilize God's mission of justice to influence meaningful and long term change in its people.** We encourage ministers to not only be a prophetic voice to its people but also provide practical and pastoral accompaniment in disaster risk reduction and management. As christians we are given the role as stewards to care for and safeguard our environment, we therefore recognize the importance faith and spirituality plays in creating a shift from a human centric to a life affirming approach.

We encourage our community leaders to **promote the fundamental principle of inclusivity** in its climate related activities, **ensuring equal representation amongst men, women, youth and children.** We believe that every voice matters in our fight towards climate justice, this crisis affects each person and the diverse representation in spaces allows for individuals to feel empowered, as a result strengthening the collective action and solidarity of your community.

Lastly, we call on our youths to be the most ambitious in our collective effort to achieve climate justice for all. Young people are able to reimagine the world with the determination, innovation and courage to disrupt and dismantle systems. Therefore, we recognize that the centrality of the role of **young people opens the door for more robust and comprehensive collective efforts for meaning and effective change.**

As a collective effort to ensure a secured future for our Pacific, we believe that in order to build from the past and move forward as a region **we must place our Pacific way of living at the centre of our foundation.** We strongly call our region to centre our Pacific values at the core of our climate activism, guided by a sense of justice and compassion that is able to reweave a narrative that not only gives meaning and coherence but provides a life affirming vision that puts the wellbeing and security of our people first.

As we continue to journey on our fight towards climate justice, may we be able to unite and stand in solidarity with the other to ensure that **no one is left behind.**