
Pacific Leaders Say Climate Will Claim Entire Nations

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The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) wrapped up its annual meeting in Palau with a call to action on the issue of global warming, with the 15-nation regional grouping saying there was no excuse not to act to curb climate change.

"We all know the causes of climate change, we know the solutions," Samoa Prime Minister Sailele Malielegaoi told reporters after releasing a communique from the three-day meeting.

"All that is left is decisive action from leaders with the courage to do what needs to be done to save the world."

Malielegaoi said Pacific island nations, some of which are barely one metre (three foot) above sea level, were at the forefront of the climate change issue because it was a matter of survival for them.

"The reason for the very strong stance put forward by Pacific island countries is that we are the most vulnerable. Many of our states will disappear under the ocean if climate change is allowed to continue."

The Forum also demanded an end to overfishing in the Pacific, largely by "distant water" fleets from as far afield as Europe. saying sustainable development was needed in the world's largest ocean.

"Leaders note with concern the rapid decline of tuna stocks and... (want to) urgently strengthen

sustainable fisheries and management plans," the communique said.

The Pacific tuna industry is worth about \$4.0 billion a year annually but relatively little of the money trickles back to Forum countries.

Scientists say tuna stocks are dwindling quickly, with the southern bluefin variety down an estimated 96 percent after decades of overfishing.

The Forum announced it had appointed its first ever female Secretary General, with lawyer and diplomat Meg Taylor of Papua New Guinea taking over from Samoa's Neroni Slade.
