



The Church of Scotland

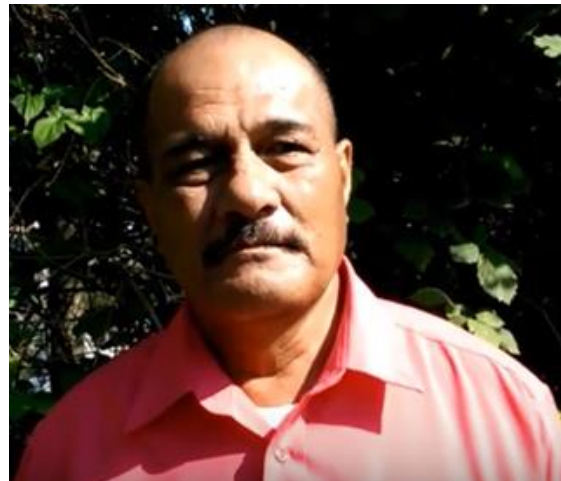
Church and Society Council

CLIMATE JUSTICE: THE VIEW FROM THE PACIFIC

Climate change will hit the Pacific islands hard which is why the forthcoming climate conference in Bonn (CoP23), chaired by Fiji, is an important opportunity to raise awareness of these impacts.

The impact on Tuvalu

One of the Pacific island nations most at risk is Tuvalu, a low lying island archipelago exposed to storm, drought and sea level rise. Adrian Shaw, Climate Change Officer of the Church of Scotland interviewed [Tafue Lusama](#) from the Congregational Church of Tuvalu at a World Council of Churches meeting earlier in the year. Tafue is in no doubt about the impact of climate change. He said:



There will be a forced movement of people out of the country to a safer place. We have to leave our ancestral land. We will lose our identity as a people, we will roam the face of the planet as homeless peoples. That is the fear we live with today because of the impacts of climate change.

[Tafue's words](#) deserve to be heard in every church and by every congregation. His words tell us why the Church of Scotland and Eco-Congregation Scotland are so concerned about the impact of climate change. The Church of Scotland will be represented at the Bonn climate conference, where Adrian Shaw will join the World Council of Churches (WCC) delegation to meet and listen to stories from others around the world about the impact of climate change.

From the Scottish Government the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, will attend the conference and plans are in place for her to meet the WCC delegation. Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, of which the Church is a leading member, will also be sending a delegation.

Background: the science is not encouraging

The latest figures from the World Meteorological Organisation's annual [Greenhouse Gas Bulletin](#) report that atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, the principal greenhouse gas by volume, reached over 403 parts per million in 2016, the highest known concentrations for 800,000 years. The report makes clear that rapidly increasing atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases have the potential to initiate unprecedented changes in climate systems, leading to “[severe ecological and economic disruptions](#),”.

At the same time the new UN Environment [Emissions Gap Report 2017](#) points to the gap between the commitments made in Paris and the current high levels of emissions. The Paris accord, adopted in 2015 by 195 countries, seeks to limit global warming in this century to under two degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level. The report warns that, as things stand, the current national pledges makes a temperature rise of at least three degrees Celsius by 2100 very likely. This is why urgent action to put the Paris agreement is needed at CoP23 in Bonn.



You can watch the interview with Tafue in full on the Eco-Congregation Scotland Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jYP2V-LHgl>.

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