

Sea level rise in the Pacific will contribute to environmental refugees

3:57 pm GMT+12, 05/04/2011

By Pita Ligaiula in Cairns, Australia

Most Pacific Island countries will continue to be affected by the impacts of sea level rise if Greenhouse gas emissions are not reduced drastically and urgently.

That's the assessment of Dr John Church from the Centre for Australian Weather and Climate Research.

"We will not be able to stop sea level rise.

"We already seen some this century, we know the climate systems are out of balance now so we are committed to some further sea level rise even if we stop all emissions today. And we know we won't be able to stop emissions today and emissions will continue.

Dr Church told PACNEWS sea level rise will also contribute to environmental refugees especially in the islands where countries in low lying atolls are vulnerable to climate change.

"Sea level will continue and this will impact people from prone areas in the Pacific Islands but it I think it will be particularly urgent where vast people live very close to the coast. Sea level rise will affect this people environment.

"Personally I think it's inevitable that there will be migrations from these areas. We can take various other adaptation measures to limit sea level rise but it's unlikely we will be able to protect every area and this will place people at risk.

Dr Church said sea level rise will be most felt in the Pacific during extreme weather patterns like La NINA and El Nino in the region.

"This will increase the risks of major impacts on island nations, so I think some of these islands will be at risk." Dr Church said.

PACNEWS coverage of the Science of Climate Change, Greenhouse 2011 conference is made possible with funding from CSIRO Australia through it Pacific Climate Change programme.

SOURCE: PACNEWS