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Increased cooperation vital to tackling climate change in Pacific, Ban says



4 August 2010 – Closer international cooperation is necessary to help Pacific island nations combat the impact of climate change, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said today, pledging the United Nations' commitment to mitigating the problem.

"No other challenge in the Pacific is as urgent and potentially life-threatening as climate change," warned Mr. Ban in a **message** to the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, being held in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

The message was delivered by Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs ([DESA](#)).

In his message the Secretary-General encouraged Pacific nations to maintain "engagement at the highest level" with the UN High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing. Mr. Ban established the group in February to study potential sources of revenue that can be used to help developing countries carry out activities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

This is particularly important, Mr. Ban stressed, because a summit on the UN's Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)) is slated for mid-September at UN Headquarters in New York. The gathering "will start our final push for the goals over the next five years," Mr. Ban said.

The MDGs are a set of enumerated and time-bound targets for tackling social and economic ills such as poverty, illiteracy and HIV/AIDS, all by 2015.

Crucial to achieving MDG 7, ensuring environmental sustainability, is the Advisory Group's effort to raise \$100 billion per year of aid to developing countries by 2020. The aid would fund initiatives that alleviate the impact of climate change, which last December's Copenhagen summit identified as having the most immediate impact on Pacific island States.

In recent years leaders from the region have warned the Security Council that climate change is causing more intense cyclones, a rise in sea levels, more 'king tides' and increasingly frequent outbreaks of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever.

The Secretary-General pointed out in his message today that the situation in the region is especially important to the entire international community because "resettling whole populations outside national boundaries is under consideration."

Meanwhile, Mr. Ban also urged "an inclusive process to return Fiji to civilian constitutional rule as soon as possible," noting that stability in Fiji is significant to preserving the rule of law and good governance in the region.

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