



## Youth advocate for sustainable use of region's natural resources

By Online Editor

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Econesian Society of Fiji representative, Tu Ma Niumataiwalu

***By Makereta Komai in Apia, Samoa for PACNEWS***

Young people attending the Rio+20 Preparatory Meeting in Apia say Pacific Leaders need to continue to vigorously push for sustainable use of the region's natural resources, to ensure a safe and secure future for them.

Representatives of youth organisations were invited to be part of the Open Forum on Green Growth in Apia and were also invited to make interventions during the Ministerial plenary session.

350.org 's Ewan Cameron, in a prepared statement said the Pacific does not need to wait for a global meeting to commit to a green economy, 'we ask you as ministers to commit now and let your actions do the talking.'

Cameron said young people need to be consulted and involved in the Rio+20 Process so that their voices as future guardians of the planet earth, are heard.

“We ask that you allow youth to contribute towards policy making decisions as we have a sense of ownership and responsibility to our countries, our families and our environment,

“We pledge to take action ourselves, Cameron said.

On the negotiations leading up to Rio+20 in June next year, the young people asked that their positions be reflected in the Pacific position.

“Pacific youth support the strong negotiation positions that reflect a low carbon future and sustainable energy practices through renewable energy, in the effort to lower carbon dioxide concentration levels of its current scale of 392ppm to 350ppm.” Cameron said.

Also, youth representatives call for investment in education capital as a pathway to green economy.

“We request Pacific governments to increase scholarship opportunities for Pacific Islanders where there are gaps in the technical areas.” Cameron said.

Econesian Society of Fiji representative, Tu Ma Niumataiwalu said sustainable use of natural resources will be his message to his peers when he returns home.

“There needs to be a change in mindset, behaviour and consumption - and this is what I will share with my peers. As a youth advocate, I am able to influence my peers because young people are more receptive to peer educators,” said Niumataiwalu.

Lucille Sain of Chuuk said the church should play an active role in advocating a sustainable future for the next generation.

“The church is very influential in the lives of young people in my country and I want the government to work with the church to advocate issues that young people can actively take part in, said Sain.....PNS (ENDS)

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