



## **Small islands States sound alarm at UN over their vulnerability to climate change**



By Online Editor

4:30 pm GMT+12, 26/09/2011, United States

*The views expressed in PACNEWS are those of agencies contributing articles and do not necessarily those of PINA and/or PACNEWS*

Representatives of Small Island States took to the podium at the General Assembly today to exhort the world to pay greater attention to their vulnerability to climate change, stressing that sustainable development will not be possible as rising sea levels threaten to swamp them.

From the Caribbean to the Pacific to the Atlantic, the small island countries said the world was not moving quickly enough to either mitigate the effects of climate change or support the poorest countries as they tried to adapt to them.

“The very existence of small islands States like those in the Caribbean and the Pacific could be imperilled if current trends are not reversed or altered,” the Prime Minister of Barbados, Freundel Stuart, told the Assembly’s annual general debate in New York.

“We must be cautious, therefore, about how we use fossil fuels, about carbon emission levels and about the unregulated treatment of waste. The planet has begun to protest through dramatic changes in climate change and the prospect of sea level rise,” said Stuart.

Grenada's Prime Minister Tillman Thomas called for agreement at ongoing United Nations-led climate change negotiations on measures aimed at reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases blamed for global warming, and for the quick disbursement of funding to help Small Island States adapt.

Tuvalu's Prime Minister Willy Telavi said his country will, during the Durban conference on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) later this year, seek a mandate to begin negotiations on a new legally binding agreement for major greenhouse gas-emitting States that have not made commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, an addition to the UNFCCC that contains legally binding measures to reduce such gas emissions.

Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, said he was "baffled by the intransigence of major emitters and developed nations that refuse to shoulder the burden for arresting climate changes that are linked to the excesses of their own wasteful policies."

The Prime Minister emphasized that time was running out for many countries as both rising sea levels and increasingly ferocious hurricanes and storms took their toll.

Cape Verde's Prime Minister Jose Maria Neves, for his part, said he was counting on all UN Member States to make the transition towards the green economy and sustainable development.

"There is in Cape Verde an ongoing and ambitious programme for the national coverage in renewable energy by 50 per cent by 2020," Dr Neves said.

Samoa's Prime Minister Tuila'epa Sailele Malielegaoi also called for more resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects in small island States.

"The Green Climate Fund is now in design phase," he said. "The representatives of governments and experts involved will do well to pay attention to the existing climate change funding architecture so that the shortcomings of other funding mechanisms will not be repeated."

Pm Tuilaepa also urged all countries with fishing interests in the Pacific Ocean to work together to stop illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the region.

Vanuatu's Prime Minister, Meltek Sato Kilman Livtuvanu, appealed to the UN to send senior missions to the Pacific to establish a more comprehensive understanding of how susceptible the people of the region are to the consequences of climate change.

"I call on leaders of advanced nations to renew and honour their pledges to finance, in particular, efforts to assist most vulnerable communities address their adaptation needs to ensure island nations survive the impending global disaster climate change may afford."

Meanwhile, in his address to the Assembly yesterday, the President of Comoros, Ikililou Dhoinine, urged the international community to help resolve his country's dispute with France

over the island of Mayotte, saying that a visa regime imposed by Paris had broken up many families.

Comoros would continue to negotiate the reintegration of Mayotte, an overseas department of France, into the rest of the Comorian archipelago, he said.

SOURCE: UN NEWS CENTRE/ PACNEWS