UN warns of climate change instability

By Online Editor
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UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has warned of economic and social instability in the Pacific Islands region if nothing is done to combat climate change.

Ban also urged the Solomon Islands to lead the way in advancing women's rights in the region.

During a press conference at the offices of Prime Minister and Cabinet in the Solomon's capital Honiara, the UN Secretary General called on the international community to do more to fight climate change, warning that low-lying atoll nations are under threat of obliteration from rising tides.

"Ocean waves can be more dangerous than an army. They can wipe out whole islands. The oceans are already destroying crops in low lying atolls.

"That puts food security at risk. Poor food security means weak social stability, Ban said.

Ban praised first world donors who he said had been generous to the island region, and called on island governments to be more transparent with how they use aid.

The world's top diplomat landed in the Solomon Islands on Saturday night, making him the first UN Secretary General to set foot in the nation and the Pacific Islands proper.

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Danny Philip said Ban's decision to visit the nation was an important one.

"Most importantly, we ... (discussed) post-conflict Solomon Islands, climate change, millennium development goals ... and impressed what we are doing here to articulate the right government policies to achieve a peaceful, cohesive, and united Solomon Islands," PM Philip said.

Women's rights were also discussed at the meeting between UN delegates and the Solomon's government.

Women are under-represented in Pacific nations, with PNG having one female Member of Parliament and Solomon Islands having none.

"I have discussed this matter, very seriously, in how the Solomon Islands and members of the Pacific Islands Forum, can promote gender empowerment," Ban said.

"It is also important to stop violence against women.

"To have lasting stability we need to protect human rights and uphold the law."

Ban left the Solomon Islands on Sunday afternoon to fly to the tiny island nation of Kiribati before travelling to Auckland for the Pacific Islands Forum.

SOURCE: aap/PACNEWS