



Consensus on the plight of vulnerable states needed ahead of Cancun talks: President Tong

By Online Editor

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Kiribati President Anote Tong is hoping the climate change conference hosted by the Pacific nation will support Kiribati's bid to push for a legally binding treaty to promote long-term action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr Tong made the remarks as he opened the Tarawa Climate Change Conference (TCCC) Wednesday.

“This will be the first real opportunity for countries on the opposite sides of climate debate to sit down and hopefully work things out. This will be an opportunity to talk rather than to negotiate. Talk about problems and may find some common grounds that why we initiated this meetings.

“An outcome that would address the challenges posed by climate change, particularly those confronting frontline and most vulnerable states. Our task is critical to ensuring the survival of peoples and of nations, President Tong said

He also highlighted the devastation caused by climate change in the island nations consisting of 32 atolls.

“In Kiribati we have experienced the increasing severity of the inundation of our shorelines caused by extra tides. In some parts of the country, whole villages have had to be relocated due to severe erosion

“Food crops have been destroyed and fresh water contaminated by the intruding se water. As you may have noticed, we draw our portable water from the underground freshwater lens. These are new experiences for us and not part of the normal weather cycle.

The Tarawa conference, President Tonga said was to build consensus towards a concrete action for Cancun.

“Action to address the climate crisis that is upon us now, particularly to assist frontline and most vulnerable states deal with adverse impacts and to ensure their survival.

He said the capacity and capabilities to deal with adverse impacts of the climate crisis is lacking

“We face unending claims for assistance to rebuild homes and to repair damages caused by the unusually high tides which we off course do have the resources to do. By now you may have all seen how fragile our islands are to any marginal rise in sea level. Our islands rise no more than two metres above sea level and are narrow strips of land less than two kilometres at the widest point and stone throw at some. This is just an example of the vulnerability of those on the frontline and most vulnerable to climate change.

“The message we are trying to make here very clearly is that we are running out of time and as long as the global community continues to debate, it may be too late for some of our communities to move them and we can’t protect them.

SOURCE: PACNEWS