

Kiribati Church calls for international community to seriously look at forced migration

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One of Kiribati's dominant church denomination, the Protestant Church has called on the international community to seriously consider the issue of forced climate migration and the resettlement of population affected by climate change.

Delivering a statement at the State banquet to welcome delegates to the two-day Tarawa Climate Change Conference (TCC), Protestant Church finance secretary, Temaia McKenzie expressed concern about the critical threat of climate change to Kiribati and the vulnerable communities throughout the world.

"We call on all stakeholders in Kiribati, Oceania and the world to renew their commitment to their moral and ethical responsibility to the issue of resettlement of 'forced climate migrants'

This is the first time the Kiribati church has come out strongly to support the creation of international policy on resettlement.

"We welcome the opportunity and are open to dialogue with all governments to discuss the sustainability and the future of our 'sinking islands', Mr McKenzie said.

The church, he said wants women and young people involved in discussion on solutions to the climate crisis.

The Speaker of Parliament, Thomas Iuta says greater political will is needed if a legally binding agreement is to be reached at the Cancun talks in Mexico next month.

"I feel that together we can come to some agreement on areas that can be brought up to the next conference of parties in Mexico this year, so that those most vulnerable among the rest can begin to address the impacts of climate change affecting their countries, he said

"I want you to consider what climate change holds for people, should the decisions we make today pay little regard to the ultimate costs that vulnerable countries such as Kiribati will have to pay in future.

Mr Iuta said the presence of delegates from other countries in Kiribati signifies the importance of the vulnerabilities small islands states face as a result of climate change.

"We not only share the same concerns on the issue but we all aspire to reach agreement on the substantive issues within the global climate change debate," he said.

SOURCE: PACNEWS