



## **Pacific Islands green/blue economic future must challenge global economic models**



By Online Editor

1:53 pm GMT+12, 03/08/2011, Fiji

Pacific Island nations cannot move to a new economic development paradigm alone, the structure of the global economy as a whole must change and move to an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable basis.

This is the message the Roundtable for Nature Conservation of the Pacific Islands want Pacific Leaders to take to Rio+20 in 2012.

“The economy needs to move towards a greener approach,” says Taholo Kami, Chair of the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRNC). “But this shift needs to be a transformational one if change to the current development model is to be realised”.

As the 14th Annual Meeting of the PIRNC last week, members welcomed the focus on moving the world to a more ecologically sustainable economic development model.

The PIRNC also feels that the current preparatory process that has begun for the Pacific Island nations for the Rio Earth Summit in 2012 should reflect that our way of ‘doing business’ failed since the first Rio Earth Summit in 1992.

“There is now a growing race for the remaining resources in the Pacific Islands,” says Stuart Chape of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme. “Our minerals, our seas and lands are being seen as a source of metal, marine products, wood and commodities to feed the demands from the developed and developing world”

It is clear that the current economic approach, which depends on the extraction and degradation of limited natural resources, cannot provide a sustainable future for the Pacific.

“When is enough, enough?” stated Fei Tevi, Secretary General of the Pacific Council of Churches who provided a spiritual perspective on the green economy discussions. “The economy is all about growth, but we need to put a cap on the way we are doing things, otherwise climate change will do it for us”.

Despite the critical environment situation facing Pacific Island nations, there are signs of hope in which the Pacific can offer lessons and models to the world.

For instance, marine and terrestrial conservation initiatives are being led at the highest political levels by the governments of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Fiji and Cook Islands. Also, the Pacific Island Countries which are the Parties to the Nauru Agreement are applying innovative conservation measures to provide for the sustainable management of commercial tuna stocks.

“There is much that needs to be praised and strengthened,” says Taholo Kami. “The PIRNC calls for stronger commitments from Pacific Rim partners to assist Pacific countries with the capacity to manage and secure their natural resources”.

Resolutions from the meeting of the PIRNC will be carried forward by the Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme and integrated to the submissions from Pacific Island Countries for Rio+20.

SOURCE: PIRNC/PACNEWS