



Pacific need to put economic value to their ecosystem, Taholo Kami

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Head of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Oceania office, Taholo Kami. The Pacific needs to assess the value of its massive ecosystems and use it to attract investments to better manage our natural resources.

The call has come from the head of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Oceania office, Taholo Kami.

Addressing the Rio+20 Pacific preparatory meeting in Apia Friday, Kami challenged Pacific ministers at the meeting to commit to investing in their natural capital.

“The whole issue of the essential ecological value of the massive Pacific ecosystem is something that needs more discussion and something we can take to the Rio+20 negotiations.

The IUCN head suggested that Pacific governments assess and put a value to their natural ecosystems and use it in global negotiations on biodiversity and climate change.

Kami said one of the challenges faced by the Pacific is that ‘we continue to be seen through the lens of aid per capita, and not our ability to manage the vast ecosystem we have.’

The Pacific Ocean covers a third of the world’s total surface area.

“How do we reshape that thinking in terms challenges to our ecosystems to the big picture of a green economy?”

“The big Pacific Ocean we have is of value to the world. The opposite end is China, who has a third of space with 1 billion people but the debate seems to be on aid per capital. For us in the Pacific, we should put a value to our ecosystem and seek investment to help us manage our ecosystems and other natural resources.

“How then do we shape an argument that when we go to the world and argue that the healthy Pacific ecosystems may have further value in future climate change discussion” asked Kami.

He said our communities in the Pacific are resilient using traditional and cultural practices to manage marine and terrestrial resources.

“I think these resilient methods of survival must be shared with the world and contained in the Pacific’s position in the Rio+20 negotiations.

Currently, the world’s natural resources are being exploited at an unsustainable level, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

In a report just released titled, “Living Planet Report 2010, WWF concludes that “if the world continues with the ‘business as usual’ scenario, humanity will be using resources and land at the rate of 2 planets each year by 2030 and just over 2.8 planets each year by 2050.”

“As the “business as usual” scenario shows, our present track is unsustainable. We therefore present two different pathways for the development of the world based upon changes to assumptions regarding energy and diet. We kept the same assumptions for biodiversity, crop yields and population growth, said the WWF report.

It recommends that governments need a proper system for measuring the value of nature.

“Governments can account for ecosystem services in cost-benefit analyses that guide land use policies and development permits. We must start with the measurement of the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services by government, said the WWF report.

This could be the first step to providing new additional financing for biodiversity conservation and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem services, including the roles for local communities and indigenous peoples.

If governments in the Pacific are able to value their natural resources, investors can then be asked to make long term sustainable investment decisions, said Kami.

“Users can be expected to invest in long term sustainable management of resources as long as the resources have a clear future value.

“Whether its green or blue economy, the challenge for governments in the Pacific is to adhere to its national and international commitments and ensure that they live up to their green bottom line.

“The bottom line for us is to ensure the ecosystems we have will endure for our children and grandchildren.

“The green economy is not an option. For the Pacific, it’s all that we have. Let’s get sustainable development work for our people and reframe the picture we take to Rio+20 in 2012, said Kami.

The Rio+20 Preparatory Meeting in Apia last week has adopted a set of draft outcomes document that will now go to regional capitals before it is finalised and sent to New York for Pacific negotiators.

SOURCE: PACNEWS