

## Consultation vital for climate strategy

By Online Editor

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National consultation is an important element in the creation of a national climate change development strategy, PNG's senior environmental policy analyst Joe Pokana has said.

With this initiative, the Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD) has embarked on a nationwide approach to meet with various stakeholders and conduct awareness on climate change.

Pokana said the development and creation of the development strategy would help analyse climate options, provide space for national consultations with stakeholders, implement projects and also provide room for monitoring and evaluation in the near future.

On the domestic front, Pokana explained that the meetings would be an intensive period of consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including government, civil society, private sector and local communities who would field test the ideas in the National Climate Change-Compatible Development Strategy (CCDS).

The national consultation, he said, would help to connect local communities to climate change options and would also capture their needs and priorities.

Meanwhile, more awareness needs to be done in the rural areas on climate change, says a Climate Change officer.

Mark Senson, from the Eco Forestry Forum (EFF), said due to lack of awareness the bulk of the country's population living in the rural areas were confused and unaware of the impact of climate change and what REDD+ (Reduction to Deforestation and Degradation) was all about.

Senson said this yesterday at the beginning of the REDD+ Stakeholders meeting at the Gateway Hotel in Port Moresby.

Senson said Climate Change which involved the warming of the earth's temperature and sea level rise was exerting pressure on lives of people and something must be done about it.

“More awareness must be done to raise people's awareness and the Government must draw a policy to address it,” he said in his presentation titled Climate Change and Impacts in PNG.

All parties involved in the issue must work together to achieve a tangible outcome in terms of adapting and mitigating its impacts, he added.

Board chairman of EFF Ken Mondiai said the purpose of the forum was to bring key stakeholders dealing with issues of Climate Change and REDD+ from the provinces into Port Moresby to hear the challenges they faced in explaining the subject to rural people and assist their network. Stakeholders include community based NGO's, government, and agencies such as the PNG National Forest Authority (PNGNFA) and the Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD) and others.

“We want them to update us on their progress of REDD and how we as an umbrella sustainable forestry NGO group can assist them,” he said.

Eco Forestry Forum is one of PNG's largest umbrella NGO who has been working towards supporting forest management and good governance in the forest sector.

The forum also discussed the impact of SABL's (Special Agriculture and Business Lease)'s.

Mary Boni, EFF Programme Manager, said abused SABL's have contributed to an increase in the rate of illegal logging, hence increase in deforestation and reducing opportunities for the REDD programme. Boni also said the impact of abuse SABL's has reduced investor confidence.

SOURCE: POST COURIER/PACNEWS