

EU to help drowning Pacific islands

By Online Editor

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Faced with the adverse effects of climate change and rising sea levels on Pacific islands, the European Union (EU) has issued a Communiqué “Towards a renewed EU–Pacific development partnership”, addressing climate change and development tailored for efficient and more coordinated cooperation.

The Communiqué also argues in favour of a stronger coordination on climate change at the international level.

The EU pledged to support the Pacific islands in the wake of the Rio+20 Conference this June where the endangered group will stress the importance of greening the economy.

Co-authors of the document the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton and Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs explained the EU approach to partnership with Pacific islands.

“We want to go beyond our traditional donor-recipient relationship, and develop a more comprehensive partnership which can successfully address issues of global importance such as climate change,” Ashton said.

Piebalgs added that “Pacific Islands are the first victims of climate change, which hampers their development and threatens peoples' lives”.

He stressed that “the EU will continue to express its solidarity with the poor and vulnerable citizens of these small islands”.

Commission will allocate additional €19 million to help Pacific islands to adapt to the challenges of global warming. Current EU development and climate change assistance to Pacific countries increased substantially to some €785 million for the period 2008-2013.

Many Pacific states already started preparations for the worst-case scenario, buying off land and islands from other countries in the region with higher average altitudes, to ensure continuity after their home islands get covered by the rising ocean levels.

SOURCE: NEW EUROPE ONLINE/PACNEWS