



## KERINA EVANGELISTS' COLLEGE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

To: An Australian Parliamentarian  
C/- Dr Julianne Stewart  
ABM-Australia Ltd  
Level 6, 51 Druitt Street Sydney, NSW 2000  
Locked Bag Q4005, Queen Victoria Building, NSW 1230

27/ 10/ 2016

**Subject: Serious effect of Climate Change and Global Warming in the Pacific**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am Newton Ekoda, a priest in the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea, who is so much overwhelmed by the effect of Climate Change and Global Warming faced by the world and more particularly by the Pacific Island nations. **I am hereby, writing to seek Australian Government's generosity in its own policies and to advocate for Climate Justice in the Pacific.**

I was born and raised in the Northern Coast of PNG, then moved to the Highlands 21 years ago where I am currently teaching in a Bible School. My village in the coast 50 years ago is no more there. It is now salt water like many thousands along the Northern coast.

We lost them gradually over the years and badly in November 15<sup>th</sup> 2007 from Cyclone Guba. The whole of Northern was badly devastated in this course. Today many that have lost homes are still struggling to rebuild with little or no help from the national government. My own people moved to higher ground on the mountain beyond Northern province' main port (Oro Bay), but continue to face strong winds and constant rip-off.

I can vividly recall where the sand bank used to be when I was 10 years old. It was nearly 100 meters away from our home. The beach was so stretched-out that we children would play games and sometimes slept there at night without fearful of being taken away in the waves. Today, it is scary hence our children and their children and those to come can't do that which is truly sad. **A question is; where would the current situation be in the next 50 years with the way it is now?** We began planting mangroves in 2014 as seen in the photos provided remedial exercise.

Last year from April to December the whole nation of PNG went through drought resulting in food gardens badly devastated. In Highlands where kau kau (sweet potato) is staple food people lost just everything thus resorting to fruits, berries and nuts for survival losing some of their young and oldies in the process.

In the recent past Vanuatu and Fiji were badly destroyed by cyclones. Those that have lost their homes and food gardens in the destructions are struggling to rebuild their lives and homes. A case in point: I was dumb-founded visiting some parts of Fiji that were badly hit by cyclone Winston in the company of Anglican Alliance Pacific Region (PRAC) delegates last month.

The Carteret Islanders as well as those from Tuvalu are resettled in mainland Bougainville and Vanua Levu, Fiji respectively as a result of high sea levels, but are struggling to fit into their new environments as they are used to fish and coconut. **Would their next generations and heritage survive, is a million dollar question for us to seriously consider as fellow pacifikers?**

I was seated next to a pastor from Canada traveling in the plane from Port Moresby to Nadi, Fiji who was on his way to Tuvalu and me to Nadi for PRAC. He was telling me what Canada as a nation was doing about Climate Change and Global Warming and his mission to Tuvalu which overwhelmed me so much that results in this letter.

I am part of the Anglican Alliance in the Pacific which comprises; Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia as well as PNG. We meet every 6 months in different parts of these nations to find ways to:

1. Mobilize humanitarian response & Reduce disaster risks
2. Support human rights and accountability
3. Advocate for trade and economic policy and
4. Raise support from Australia and New Zealand for particular focus areas

It is in this capacity that I write to seek support from our bigger brother-Australia to consider us-the little Pacifikers in its policy making hence use its weight in the global community on our **sustainability** as well our **fate**.

With that I have enclosed some photos taken in PNG and in Fiji from my recent visit for you to have a glimpse of what I have expressed so far.

Thank you so much.

Yours Sincerely,

Newton Ekoda  
(Priest/ Lecturer)

\*\*\*\*\*



Aerial view of Repi Island in the Vona Vona lagoon in its populated days

Hi, my name is Tagolyn Kabekabe and I am from the most beautiful part of the Solomon Islands, Western Province. I now live and work in Honiara, the capital city of the country but go home every now and then to visit my family who lives in a rural village. In the village we live a subsistence way of life depending very much on what nature has provided in the sea and on the land.

However, our subsistence way of life is fast changing due to the effects and impacts of climate change. I am going to talk about a community that has relocated due to;

1. Frequent and unpredictable stronger winds and storms that destroys homes and properties and took lives away, frequent king tides that washes through villages in lower lying islands taking everything away that was in its path and inundation of salt water into fresh water wells and gardening lands.

Repi Island in the middle of the Vona Vona lagoon once had a population of almost a thousand people and provided the basic services to its community such as a local primary school, a clinic, a church building for daily prayers and a network of bore holes for their daily water. All these changed more than 15 – 20 years ago when families would wake up in the mornings and find that everything in their bush kitchen on the ground had been washed away by unusual high tides in the night including their canoes, livestock etc... worse still would be the bore holes, they would be filled with salt water and unsuitable for use for days till the tides have gone down or unless they bailed the salt water out. Water tanks were bought to supplement the bore water, but these were taken by the king tides when they occurred in the night.

People built stonewall and storm walls to counter the impacts of stronger sea surges and to stop soil erosion but these efforts are futile. And so as planting mangroves to protect the seafronts as the stronger the sea surges with strong winds and higher tides, the mangroves are uprooted and washed away! The community got fed up and with no external help relocated the entire community to a much bigger island where they have gardening land and that is where they settle today. Repi Island is a ghost skeleton of an island now that once happy, healthy children lived and grow up and enjoy the sea and the resources that came with it.

Such communities as this here in the Solomon Islands are calling on the Australian leaders to;

1. Accept the fact that internal displacement of indigenous people is real and that these people need help to determine their own future through proper dialogue that values their customs and cultures and to respect the sensitivity surrounding such discussions.

Thank you very much



Repi Islanders in their new village

\*\*\*\*\*

Hello, my name is Riko Mone and I am from Rarumana village in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands. I grew up in the village, attend the local primary and middle school and enjoyed the rural subsistence way of life in gardening, swimming, fishing, diving and collecting shellfish from the mangroves and reefs. There was always plentiful to harvest and plentiful left for another day and plentiful to eat to ones content!

This has changed drastically in the last ten or so years and it is now very difficult to find enough shellfish to feed the family. The mangrove swamps have either dried up or too much salt water intrusion that the shellfish can no longer survive and multiply. This particular art of fishing is done by women and girls and with this situation that we are faced with, women and girls now have to go far from home to fish and it is risky as new fishing grounds may mean an area inhabited by crocodiles or other dangers. In most villages women and girls have given up this art of fishing in fear of their lives and therefore their families missing out on a vital source of protein that can be acquired all weather and a marketable product reducing their

income. With the loss of an income, it affects their ability to pay for their children's school fees, medical expenses, access to communication and many other things.

The above has happened and continues to happen and we strongly connect it to the effects and impacts of climate change though we do not have a word or expression in our local dialect to describe this.

We are calling on Australian Leaders as our nearest neighbours and wantoks to;

1. Close ALL industries that contributes to global warming
2. Come to our islands with experts in these areas and see for yourselves the destruction and do something that will help alleviate the problems

Thank you

\*\*\*\*\*



My name is Jessie Rongotha and I am from Vaimaea Village, Marau Sound in East Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. I grew up in my village and enjoyed the simple ways of life with my family; gardening, fishing and attending to community and Church activities. I now live in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands with my husband who is a priest with the Anglican Church of Melanesia and children. I am also a Mothers Union leader in our parish and teach adult literacy. I do go home to the village on a regular basis and support my aging parents.

One of the most notable things that is affecting my local community and our livelihood and which we strongly connect to the effects of climate change is unpredictable weather pattern, in particular we are getting a lot more rain than usual and this has affected our root crops and yields. We are not getting the usual tubers; what we are getting now is either very small tubers or no tubers at all!

With poor yields we are not able to sell our crops at the local or city markets and this means denying our children their education because we are not able to pay for their school fees. Not only that, our people now has to drastically change from eating local fresh foods to relying on rice, noodles and flour. These foods are costly and difficult to get to the rural village let alone with no root crops to sell at the markets, it is difficult for families in the village to buy them and so they depended on their family members working in the city to support them.

There is also health issues connected to their change of diet, older people are not doing well eating rice and noodles and developing hypertension and diabetes and other illnesses.

I am calling on Australian leaders as our closest and dependable friends to seriously consider our plight as self-sustaining communities depending on our local foods to do the followings;

1. Introduce resistance crops that can withstand such unpredictable weather we are experiencing now
2. Assistance through research to determine soil fertility and most suitable crops that are similar to local crops

Tagio tumas [thank you very much]

\*\*\*\*\*



Hello, my name is Edith Padavisu and I am from Paru village, West Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. I am also the Mothers Union president of the Diocese of Guadalcanal and live and work in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands. I

grew up in my village with my parents with a traditional upbringing of a girl child and enjoyed everything and was given the opportunity to attend school to secondary and tertiary level and formal employment. I regularly go home to the village as my children and grandchildren lives there now.

The effects and impacts of climate change we live with them now on a daily basis. Our people depend on natural water sources for drinking and all other household water uses and women and girls harvest water from these sources. Due to unpredictable weather patterns these water sources are being affected. In particular the long period of dry spell has had serious impacts on these sources that have seen them drying up or that algae and other water parasites have taken over these water sources.

As a result, our women and girls have to go far to collect water for family uses and this is posing a threat to them as the land where the water sources are owned by other tribes and clans and disputes and compensation demands are becoming everyday occurrences. Because of this, families are using the sea to swim and for other household uses and this are posing some health risks as well such as itchiness and skin diseases etc...

I am calling on Australian Leaders as our big brothers and sisters in the region to;

1. Recognise the fact that climate change is real
2. Provide technical assistance and expertise and be tolerant to our needs

Tagio tumas [picture taken crossing a flooding river during her mission outreach to a rural community in East Guadalcanal]



My name is George Barikana Omese and I lived in my village in the Western part of the Solomon Islands.

One of the most notable events that continues to happen and which we attribute to the effects and impacts of climate change is the unpredictable low and high tides. Tides in our local understanding is at the interval of 12 hours and on a broader sense it also comes in a season of high and low tides and this we understand because we connect it to harvesting certain sea foods. In the last 10 years the tides have been erratic and have been coming in and going out at intervals less than 12 hours meaning in a day there are 2 high tides lasting 4 hours or less.

There are days when the tides remain high for more than 12 hours and days when the low tides last for two days.

The problem with this is that we are not able to harvest sea foods that come in season anymore because the unusual tides have killed everything or that the species have now moved away.

We have tried planting mangroves to counter the surges that come with the unusual higher tides but this is not really working. I have personally done some mitigation work on collecting mangrove seedlings from different parts of the lagoon, waterways and islands and planted them and it showed that seedlings from certain areas showed promise whilst others died. I have discussed this with local authorities but their feedbacks have not been very good.

I am calling on Australian leaders to provide expert and technical assistance to;

1. Identifying the different varieties of mangroves that resist harsh conditions
2. Identifying shellfish and fish varieties that resist unpredictable conditions such as we are experiencing

Thank you [from a mobile conversation]

\*\*\*\*\*



My name is Emily Pengalo. I come from a tiny low lying island, the Reef Islands in the Temotu Province, on the eastern part of Solomon Islands. We depend very much on breadfruit and coconut as food for economy and livelihood. The breadfruit is seasonal, not bearing fruit all year around, but it does two or three times a year.

Fifty years ago, during my childhood when my grandparents and parents harvested breadfruits, I remembered them getting 100 – 200+ fruits from just one tree. Now that the effects of climate change are seen and experienced, breadfruits with poor yields are harvested from 4 - 6 trees to reach one hundred to two hundred fruits at one harvesting time.

The coconuts also played a major role in the economy of my people in the islands. Coconuts were dried in huge driers, sacked and sent off to buyers who paid good money for the best quality. Coconut palms now bear only one or two fruits per bunch per palm. The coconut fruits are of a very small size and other palm trees don't bear any fruits at all. However, palm leaves are also appear to be short sized and of no quality. Breadfruits and coconuts have declined over the years as a result of climate changes.

Thank you

CLIMATE CHANGE – IMPACTING MY LIFE	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT is VITAL and calling on Australian leaders to;
<p>Human Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experiencing outbreak of diseases resulting from warmer polluted air and longer periods of drought affecting our health.</li> <li>▪ We are already seeing changes in the distribution of water borne illness and diseases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adaptation and Mitigation Awareness Programs are needed to be delivered to (us) people in this area.</li> <li>▪ Help us and nature adapt to a changing climate and to promote new farming techniques.</li> <li>▪ Advance policies to fight climate change.</li> </ul>
<p>Heavy rain and severe weather events is causing floods and decreasing water quality. Also decreasing availability of water resources.</p>	
<p>Rising sea levels is causing Coastal dwellers and inhabitants a result of not equipped for adapting to changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changes resulting in flooding and erosion of coastal and low lying areas.</li> <li>▪ Experiences of low and high tide patterns.</li> <li>▪ Dependants of natural environment having the least resources to cope with the changes and threatening their livelihoods, places and species.</li> </ul>	
<p>Farming threat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Risk of food security</li> <li>▪ Poor yield of crops resulting in immature ripening of fruits, eg, Breadfruits and coconut.</li> <li>▪ Low excess of food productivity and quality- not tasty.</li> <li>▪ Salinity of soil affecting fruit tree roots causing infertility.</li> <li>▪ Diseases and pests which affects yields.</li> <li>▪ Longer, more intense droughts threaten crops, wildlife and freshwater supplies.</li> </ul>	
<p>Transportation and Infrastructure are at risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disrupt how we travel and commute</li> <li>▪ Hot weather</li> <li>▪ Severe weather events damage infrastructure and heavy burden on electrical supplies.</li> </ul>	