

# TOWARDS A CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTION



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We tried to complete this simple report in such haste, and there are still many more stories to tell about climate change and its mitigation/solutions. However, we were able to pull resources together; from across our region and the globe to present you with this brief outline and to take a closer look at Fiji's example in the Pacific, as a regional leader in planning for climate change. The contributions here were nothing short of a blessing.

- To the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, my most humble appreciation for your support, encouragement and prayers. *Vinaka Vakalevu* to our three Archbishops – Rt. Rev. B. Turei (Tikanga Maori), Rt. Rev. P. Richardson (Tikanga Pakeha), Rt. Rev. W. Halapua (Tikanga Pasefika) for their strong leadership and perseverance to bring justice and peace within our Province and region with regards to climate change and taking our region's plight to the Communion and the World.
- We offer special thanks to Archbishop Thabo, for bringing together our Communion in Cape Town for this incredibly important meeting. Thank you for the foresight and vision in planning ahead for our World and the future of our children. *Vinaka Vakalevu*
- Our thanks to the staff of the Anglican Consultative Council, with the special mention of Terrie Robinson and Lynne Butt, to Rev. Dr Rachel Mash, of the Archbishop's office in Cape Town, to Rev. Michael Hughes, General Secretary of our Province, and Mr. J. Simmons, our Diocesan Secretary (Diocese of Polynesia) as well as our Diocesan Treasurer Mrs. P Bhan – Thank you all so very much for your efforts and hard work, to facilitate my travel and furnishing me with all the necessities for this meeting. I offer my sincere gratitude.
- To the Government of the Republic of Fiji, especially to the Climate Change Department, The Natural Disaster Management Office and the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs respectively. My earnest appreciation for the resources provided to me, in preparation for this meeting.
- *Vinaka* also to my family, Mrs. T Qiliho and the team for all the work and dedication to get me across to South Africa well prepared. Thank you for the encouragement and prayers.

*Vinaka Vakalevu*

*Api Qiliho*

# INTRODUCTION

*Ni sa bula Vinaka, Namaste* and greetings from the 300 beautiful Fijian Islands. I bring greetings also from our young children, young people and brothers and sisters in our 10 Small Independent Island States in the great Pacific Ocean. I am very happy to be here with you sisters and brothers to talanoa/share our story. I also stand here with so many in the household of God no longer waiting but trying through discernment for amiable solutions to our plight, CLIMATE CHANGE.

My sincere appreciation to His Grace the Archbishop for His invitation to join Him in the search for solutions so that the future of God's children is safe, and guaranteed. The words of the first President of Tanzania came out so clearly in this regard, "The land is not given to you by your fathers BUT loaned to you by your children." With this brief introduction I am very happy indeed to present this 'talanoa' (Story).



Source: <http://www.fjivacations.com/fiji-beach-resort/>

## Since Lima

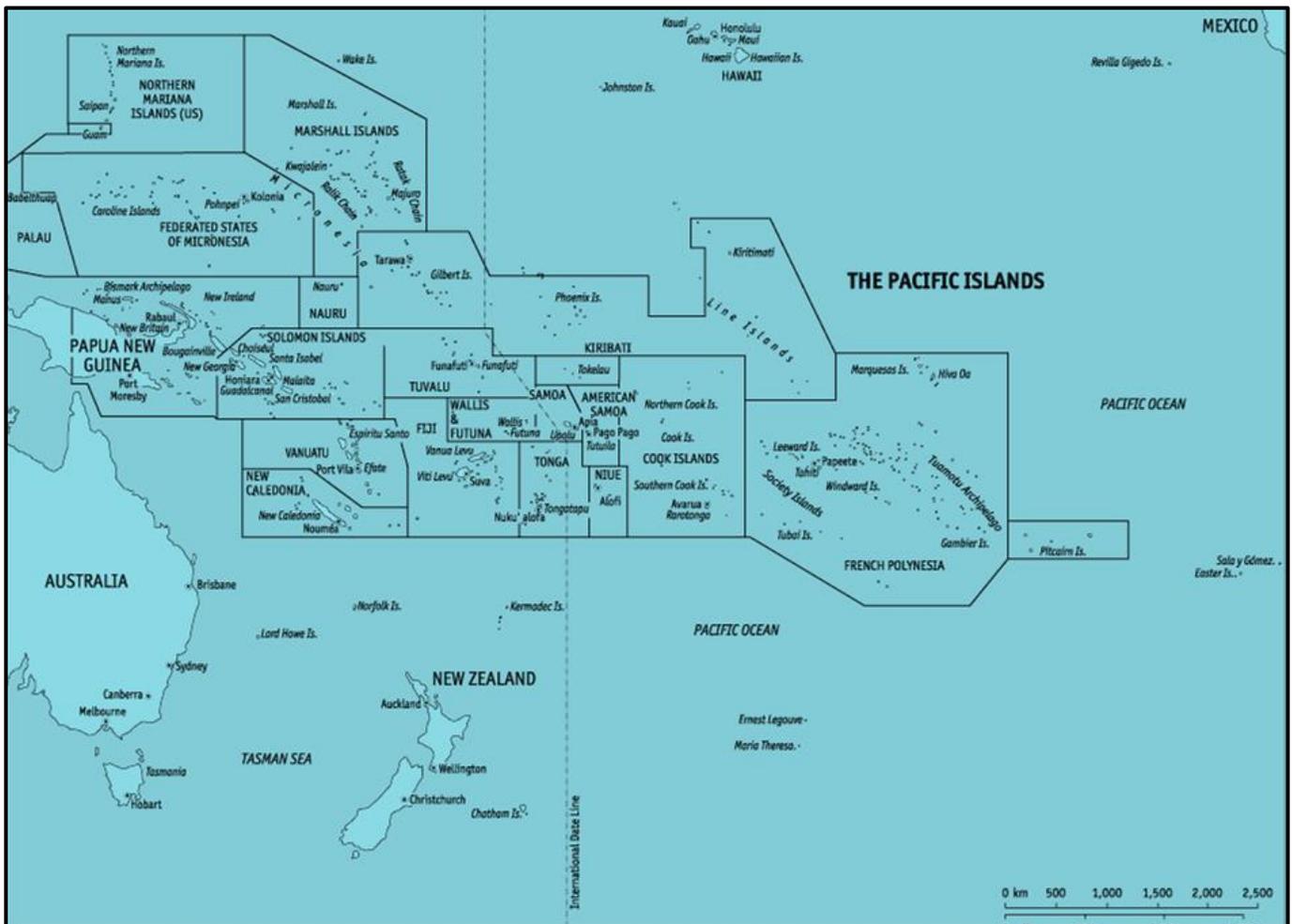
I returned to Fiji with a mixed feeling. In my Christian life I started to question my own call as a baptized to represent Christ to the world. What does that mean to me? What I witnessed in Peru was so much that I felt that I had failed God. There was a book by David Atkinson called "Renewing the Face of the Earth." The book was first published in 2008. It really helped to me reflect on the theological and pastoral response to climate change. What is my task as a Christian? One important point that the book drives home for me was that as Christian I should have done more in my witness as baptized and a disciple of Christ. I learned to seek forgiveness and to be reconciled with God. I saw my fault more from there on than those around me.

## What is new?

Our story in the Fiji Islands is much the same story that is shared across our ocean, with our Pacific brothers and sisters. Our home is the 'Pacific Ocean'; it is the largest body of water in the world. It covers one third of the earth's surface – 69.4 million square miles. In other words it is larger than all the Earth's landmass amalgamated. We can't imagine.

We have 14 Independent States, excluding Australia and New Zealand, this leaves 10 small island states, plus Papua New Guinea and Fiji. While our needs are different and our responses to these environmental needs and concerns vary depending on where we are in the Pacific, we can all find overarching responses that find their mark all across our sea of Islands.

But the reality on the ground is one hundred percent true. We are no longer in need of scientific wisdom to prove beyond doubt, to each and every one of us, that the Climate Change is real. It is true and real and above all it is already destroying our homes.



## In the Region

At this point, I should like to take us on a journey to this sea of islands, so that we may glean the truth and the reality of Climate change, but also the incredible resilience of its inhabitants. We take a look at some brief examples, to understand the localized effects of climate change in the Pacific, but also in the wider context of the region, where commonalities exist.

Pacific Island countries and territories already experience an extraordinary level of risk from the effects of extreme weather and climate unpredictability, and these risks can be exacerbated by climate change. Climate models suggest that the Pacific region will continue to warm, which could result in changes in the frequency and/or intensity of extreme weather and climate variability phenomena, and in the faster rising of sea-level (*Republic of Fiji National Climate Change Policy 2012*).

- ▶ We have heard of the plight of our brothers and sisters in the islands of Kiribati, of the encroaching sea, and of the loss of their land, before their very eyes. Their President, Mr. Anote Tong is an ardent campaigner for a change in global thinking on climate change and is pleading the case of his people and disappearing nation around the world. Fiji, a close neighbor, has already offered unconditional resettlement to all I-Kiribati. The Anglican Church in Polynesia sold a large parcel of land to Kiribati, so that their people could have some food security for their future, through the planting and harvesting of that land. Our neighbors Australia and New Zealand are also looking at ways to help.
- ▶ In Tuvalu, her scattered atolls have been feeling the serious impacts of climate change now for almost a decade. Any arable land is now saline. The sea has also found its way into people's gardens and homes. Atolls are being abandoned in the face of an ever present, ever creeping ocean. The people now crowd into the few towns in Tuvalu, trying to escape. In a few years, even these towns may no longer be suitable areas of habitation.
- ▶ In Fiji alone, we expect 500 communities from our coasts, flatlands and rivers to be relocated within the next decade. According to existing climate change models, we will still be just at the start of the long process of this change in our climate, temperatures and world. Throughout my presentation, our focus will largely dwell on Fiji. I am quite proud to say that we lead our range in mitigation strategies and green growth policies, but more on that later.
- ▶ The strength and ferocity of weather events has also been noted by national and regional meteorological bodies. Also noted are the increasing severity of droughts and flooding occurrences in recent years. Furthermore, warmer weather has brought cyclone in increasing strength to the region, with the most recent being Typhoon Hainan, which crossed over the North Pacific before becoming the super storm that wreaked unimaginable damage in the Philippines.

In the Pacific today, the Churches, other faiths, various Island States Governments, Pacific Island Leaders Forum, Provinces, Communities, Regional bodies, International Organizations, Corporate Bodies groups and individuals are all searching for solutions.

I wish to highlight some important examples of these imperative collaborative efforts and how they pertain to the search for climate change solutions for the region that can be replicated across our world.



*Sigatoka Sand Dunes, Nadroga, Fiji*

Source: <http://coralcoastfiji.org/activities/sigatoka-sand-dunes-national-park>

As I *'talanoa'* - sharing this story with you, all our people in the Pacific continue at every level, to pray and work hand in hand with friends towards amiable solutions. Christians around the Pacific work together under the Pacific Conference of Churches to empower the 30 member Churches. This in turn supplements the work of our governments and NGO's.

"PCC's long term development aim in the area of "Stewardship" is to address the broad justice implications of environment degradation with a particular focus on climate change impacts in the Pacific region."

Since the PCC's beginnings, the organization and its members have always strongly advocated for the measured guardianship of our environment. This dedication helped shore up PCC's support of the anti-nuclear testing and anti-militarism struggle between the 1970's to the early 1990's.

At PCC's 10th General Assembly in Honiara, the unrelenting prominence placed on the environment was reaffirmed and again, climate justice was considered an imperative part, being delegated as one of the core work areas for the next five years.

The objectives to be addressed within stewardship are:

- Create a deeper understanding of the biblical mandate regarding our responsibility for the environment and wealth we create
- Raise awareness on the impacts of climate change and related natural disasters on the social and economic wellbeing and the basic needs of Pacific communities, and practical ways to mitigate these.
- Promote good governance and leadership with regards to our responsibility to protect and conserve the environment.

### Climate Justice

On behalf of its members, PCC continuously remains an active advocate at national, regional and international political forums. Information obtained from the results of in-country climate justice workshops with nationwide member churches are made available to the General Assembly, from which materials on its resolutions are sourced directly for advocacy. Advocacy work is being undertaken with commission research as well as cross network cooperation at the regional and international level.



Source: FIJI SUN NEWSPAPER



Source: FIJI SUN NEWSPAPER



## NATIONAL FRAMEWORK AND MITIGATION POLICIES

Fiji, for at least the last 7 years has been in the process of reforming its existing legislative framework and enacting new policies and legislation for the mitigation of climate change in Fiji. While Fiji is not a major polluter by global standards, it has already seen suffering brought about by climate change. This is indeed the case amongst most of the Pacific Islands, with countries such as Kiribati and Tuvalu seeing some of the most prolific sea level rise and food security concerns wrought by soaring global temperatures and rising sea levels within this decade.

It has been the national policy of the Republic of Fiji and of the central government to deal with these challenges proactively, and climate change has become a national priority and focus. Comprehensive policies have been developed and are being enforced across a wide variety of areas in order to form a coherent and far-reaching mitigation of this natural disaster, as the Fiji Government calls it. It is this early response and preemptive action that has put Fiji at the forefront of Climate change mitigation in the Pacific Region, where its examples have been used as a model for change in other island nations.

Policies have been developed for crucial areas such as land, marine, agriculture and that future development is sustainable. A major focus is the use of the countries resources and how its use affects the environment. These policies play an important role in supporting efforts to reduce adverse impacts of climate change on Fiji's economic and social development. However this sustainable development is hard to achieve with the onslaught of climate change, a unique paradox Fiji is currently working hard to overcome.



Source: [http://www.mangrove.at/mangrove\\_forests.html](http://www.mangrove.at/mangrove_forests.html)

Effective coordination of government services and policies with regards to climate change is an important step in articulating their position across the board to other organizations, both longstanding, such as the EU, The UN, UNDP, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and The Pacific Islands Forum , as well as newer entrants, who are helping in these important mitigation efforts. In 2007, Cabinet endorsed Fiji's National Climate Change Policy Framework, which defined the position of government and other stakeholders on issues of climate change, climate variability and sea level rise.

This National Climate Change Policy (referred to from here as the NCCP) provides guidelines for sectors to ensure that current and expected impacts of climate change are considered in their planning and implementation programmes. In addition, relevant sectors are encouraged to take up climate change mitigation initiatives as part of Fiji's contribution to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## The NCCP

### Mission:

- To increase Fiji's capacity to cope with the impacts of climate change by strengthening institutional and legal frameworks, providing sound scientific information, and implementing effective awareness and education initiatives
- To maximize access to and secure globally available financing for climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts
- To strengthen Fiji's support towards neighboring Pacific Island countries that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change
- To strengthen engagement in international climate change policy processes and fulfil obligations on climate change mitigation and adaptation

Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures have the potential to deliver cross-sectoral benefits. For example:

- mitigation measures focused on reducing energy consumption will also reduce Fiji's reliance on fuel imports and, in turn, reduce household energy bills;
- mitigation measures focused on reducing petrol and diesel consumption may also improve traffic conditions, reduce reliance on vehicular transport and reduce pollution in urban areas;
- reduction in the use of fuel-based transport and emissions of green-house gases will encourage healthier lifestyles (e.g. walking and cycling) and improved living conditions (e.g. reduction in air pollution), which can contribute to a reduction of some non-communicable diseases;
- mitigation measures focused on maintaining forest carbon stocks and increasing sequestration of carbon through forest conservation, reforestation, afforestation and enrichment planting will also contribute to biodiversity conservation, improved watershed management, improved food security and improved waterway conditions;
- Conservation and sustainable management of mangroves will protect a large carbon sink and reservoir, while providing physical foreshore protection, marine breeding grounds, and healthy coral reef systems.
- Many adaptation and mitigation measures would be worthwhile, regardless of climate change related impacts. These options are often referred to as no 'regrets' options.

## Objective 5: Adaptation

Reduce the vulnerability and enhance the resilience of Fiji's communities to the impacts of climate change and disasters.

### Strategies

1. Integrate related disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies and actions into national and sectoral planning to streamline responses.
2. Include vulnerability assessments and climate change impact projections into resource management planning, such as integrated coastal and watershed management plans.
3. Incorporate climate change impact projections into infrastructure and urban and rural planning.
4. Develop sustainable adaptation technologies and systems that take traditional knowledge into account and are culturally acceptable.
5. Support the ecosystem-based approach throughout Fiji, recognising that ecosystem services, such as food security, natural hazard mitigation and physical coastal buffer zones, increase resilience.
6. Develop and make accessible hazard maps of coastal, riverine, urban and inland areas in Fiji, using the comprehensive hazard assessment and risk management (CHARM) tool to guide all development planning.
7. Assess poverty, health and food security issues to determine their vulnerability to climate change, and consider these vulnerabilities in future policies and initiatives.

Source: Republic of Fiji – National Climate Change Policy, 2012



Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: <http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/fiji-building-resilience-face-climate-change>

## Objective 6: Mitigation

### Reduce Fiji's greenhouse gas emissions and implement initiatives to increase the sequestration and storage of greenhouse gases.

#### Strategies

1. Develop joint programmes and cooperation agreements between relevant sectors to reduce and avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
2. Develop and implement national, industrial, commercial (such as the tourism, agriculture and mining sectors) and household energy efficiency programmes, including provision of rebates, incentives and disincentives.
3. Assess and utilise appropriate renewable energy sources, such as wave, tidal, solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, biofuel and biomass.
4. Support the implementation of the Fiji REDD-Plus Policy, the Fiji Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, the National Air Pollution Control Strategy, the Ozone Depleting Substances Decree, the National Energy Policy, the Clean Development Mechanism Policy Guideline and other relevant national policies and strategies on the reduction of GHG emissions, deforestation, forest degradation and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
5. Access international financing instruments to support renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management and carbon trading initiatives.
6. Control and reduce emissions from existing private and public vehicles.
7. Control the ages of imported and second-hand vehicles and introduce alternative fuel powered vehicles.
8. Develop activities and infrastructure that promote the reduction and avoidance of fossil fuel consumption (for example, construct proper walking and cycling lanes).
9. Support the enforcement of legislation on open burning in residential and commercial locations, as stated by the Environment Management Act (2005).
10. Formalise collaboration arrangements and commitments of members of committees working in the area of climate change mitigation, such as the Carbon Trading Technical Team, and the Fiji REDD-Plus Steering Committee.

*Source: Republic of Fiji – National Climate Change Policy, 2012*

The Fiji Government has also developed what is called the 'Environment Management Act' which was passed in 2005. While not ground-breaking in itself, it sets out the guidelines and initiated the laws now dealing with climate change in my nation. All existing environmental policies and laws now strengthen that initial act, amend it, or are rooted in this act.

Furthermore, it sets out regulations and guides for how development is to be carried out in Fiji. This act is also an important stepping stone in important policies such as the Green Economy – Green Growth theme for national development and the NCCP.

## **Objective 7: Financing**

**Ensure sustainable financing for climate change efforts.**

### **Strategies**

1. Ensure that national budgeting processes include the assignment of funds for climate change mitigation and adaptation research, planning and programme implementation.
2. Develop innovative approaches and schemes to generate funds for adaptation activities at local and national level.
3. Support the UNFCCC National Focal Point to efficiently and effectively access and deliver funds from regional and international sources.
4. Develop an overview of climate change funding and costs in order to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of funding mechanisms and project delivery.
5. Ensure adequate distribution of climate change funding, such as GEF and the Adaptation Fund, into climate change-related projects in all government agencies.
6. Secretariat of the NCCCT to collaborate with the Development Partners of Climate Change (DPCC) Committee in sharing information and coordinating and streamlining donor-funded projects.
7. Improve financial reporting to the Ministry of Finance to ensure proper disbursement and utilisation of funds.
8. Develop an analysis of the economics of climate change adaptation and mitigation in Fiji to identify cost-effective and cost-ineffective approaches.
9. Support and develop the capacity of government agencies and local NGOs and CBOs in proposal formulation and reporting in order to improve access to funds from regional and international sources.
10. Provide adequate resources to the Climate Change Unit.
11. Implement recommendations from the 'Mainstreaming climate change into national development and budgeting' feasibility study (supported by the Global Climate Change Alliance Facility).
12. Develop projects and initiatives with carbon financing potential.

## **Objective 8: International and Pacific region participation**

**Effectively participate in and contribute to international and Pacific region climate change negotiations, discussions, commitments and outcomes.**

### **Strategies**

1. Strengthen international negotiation skills of Fiji delegation members and improve their understanding of international policies relating to climate change.
2. Ensure maximum preparation for international and Pacific regional meetings relating to climate change by encouraging cross-sectoral engagement and capacity building.
3. Ensure Fiji's fulfilment of international reporting requirements through streamlined reporting of climate change issues to the three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD) and systematic monitoring across all sectors.
4. Support a stronger and better coordinated Pacific position on climate change by initiating a collective Pacific regional approach at global negotiations on climate change issues.
5. Facilitate the development of a national and regional supporting mechanism for neighbouring Pacific Island countries that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

*Source: Republic of Fiji – National Climate Change Policy, 2012*

## Pacific Council of Churches – National Initiatives

In April 2013 the PCC worked together with Fiji’s Department of Environment to help plan Fiji’s first inter-religious summit on the theme; ‘Our stewardship responsibility in caring for creation.’

The summit created an opportunity for religious leaders from major faith communities in Fiji for a three day Summit to discuss their shared responsibility between the government and communities of faith. Religious leaders were urged to take up a significant responsibility to ensure their congregations became stewards of the environment and its natural resources.

The summit also provided the foundation for further discussions with faith based organizations throughout the Pacific on environment and climate change issues. Concurrently, a spirit of unity and nation building was fostered through this inter-religious dialogue.

The Department of Environment has since held regular quarterly meetings with faith leaders to safeguard continued commitment to the Summit outcomes.

The role of faith based institutions in coping with climate change and climate change mitigation cannot be understated. PCC used this opportunity to speak about the theme of climate justice and the importance of faith and faith groups in society. PCC also used this opportunity to present some of its findings on climate induced relocation. This meeting convened in Narewa village in Nadi, brought together 300 representatives from participants government ministries, civil society and community groups and inter-governmental organizations.

In addition, the PCC speaks to regional students at seminars conducted at the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the Department of climate change (USP PACE – SD)

- In 2013, seven regional and international research students were received by PCC, eager to learn about PCC’S research on climate justice but more importantly the work it undertakes on climate induced relocation.
- For the periods 2011 to 2013 PCC was appointed Pacific NGO focal point for the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable (PCCR), a regional state led initiative coordinated by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and key stakeholders working on adaption in the region.
- International: Since 2007 PCC has been represented at the annual climate conferences of the parties (COP) of UNFCCC. In 2009 PCC became officially accredited to the Fiji delegation in an effort by the Fiji government to have a civil society that is working on climate change, to assist their effective participation in COP and their negotiations.
- PCC continues to full and enthusiastic participate with the World Council of Churches Working Group on Climate.
- PCC visited the people of Kioa who had relocated from Vaitupu (Tuvalu) in 1972.

## A BRIEF LOOK AT THE VUNIDOGOLOA EXAMPLE

As I mentioned earlier, Fiji expects to resettle and rebuild 500 communities from our coasts, flatlands and rivers to be relocated within the next decade. We would be just 'at the tip of the iceberg' of climate change in that time. So it is safe to assume that the expected resettlement would continue on a larger scale after that, with the continuing change in climatic conditions.

The government has been exceedingly proactive in beginning resettlement work very early. As some continue to deny the existence of climate change, we have begun the process of preparation and mitigation, for our people and our future. This format is enthusiastically being accepted and taken on by other Pacific Nations (including those within our province). It is safe to say that resettlement and revaluation of plans in these other Pacific nations will also begin within the next decade, if not already.

I have selected the example of Vunidogoloa, a village in Vanua Levu, Fiji's second largest Island. A coastal settlement, that is currently in the process of a government organized, relocation and resettlement. Two sources are made available here for your analysis.



## CONCLUSION

*“The ‘covenant’ theme holds together a Christian response to many questions posed for us by climate change. It gives us a perspective on our human relationships to the rest of God’s creation. It offers us a Sabbath vision of ‘the sacred’, of joy and sufficiency. It calls us back to living sustainably and justly, and gives us a basis for hope in God’s future.”*

(Renewing the Face of the Earth by D. Atkinso, 2008, p.140)

We are all at a crucial juncture in our history. In our history as humanity, as members of this Communion and as appointed guardians and steward of the environment Our Lord had provided us with. Climate change is upon us, we can never go back to before it was an issue. The onus is upon us to honor our commitment to God, as the caretakers of His creation, and to move forward from here. Fiji and the Pacific are undoubtedly at the very centre of the change our world is going through.

Fiji has made great strides within the areas of climate change adaption and climate change mitigation, and I commend the good work happening there. Nations across the Pacific are taking up the Fiji example as a way to prepare themselves as well for the coming struggle.

Proactive approaches, multi-lateral cooperation, innovation and actions are needed to shore up the Pacific, and indeed the world, into making a permanent change. More can be done, and it will be done if we are of one mind, one heart and of one spirit, to challenge our leaders and decision makers to work effectively to end the calamity that surely awaits us if we continue blindly down this road.

The seas rise a little bit more every year and more frequent, more deadly, extreme weather events occur. It is our task to stand in Solidarity today, and approach those who would lead us, to make our voices heard. We are working towards safeguarding a future that is not ours, but the future of our children. Work must begin now for that future.

*Vinaka Vakalevu, Bohut Dhanyavaad and Thank You.*

I leave you with words from the Common Worship, Holy Communion.

*May we who share Christ’s body live his risen life;  
We who drink his cup bring life to others;  
We whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.  
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,  
So we and all your children will be free,  
And the whole earth live to praise your name;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*