

[Small island nations in Pacific urge global action to fight climate change](#)

23 September 2017 – Leaders from Pacific island nations addressing the United Nations General Assembly today urged Governments to implement the [Paris Agreement](#), and contribute to fighting climate change and supporting sustainable development efforts.

“Micronesia expresses grave concern that some countries have chosen to break with the international community and neglect the Paris Agreement, contrary to all of the best scientific advice,” the country’s Vice President, Yosiwo George, said in the UN General Assembly Hall in New York.

Agreed by 195 nations, the 2015 Paris Agreement seeks to combat climate change and unleash actions and investment towards a low carbon, resilient and sustainable future. Its main aim is to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

In addition to implementing the Agreement, Mr. George urged world leaders to support the [Green Climate Fund](#) which aims to finance “green” investments in developing countries.

He voiced concerns about lack of ambition in face of mounting threats to the health of the oceans, urging a special provision to be created for small island developing states within the UN Law of the Sea Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological areas.

Fishing rights in exclusive economic zones are of particularly concern, Mr. George said, urging the international community “to remain steadfast in our efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in all its forms.”

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Peter Paire O’Neill of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Ariana Lindquist

The head of Government in Papua New Guinea expressed similar concerns, noting that the global fish stocks are being “decimated” and “people are being forced to abandon their traditional homes because they have to jobs or food.”

Peter O’Neill told the UN General Assembly that the problem of unsustainable use of natural resources is part of the bigger issue of climate change and its adverse impacts, which include seawater flooding in coastal communities,

extreme tropical storms and severe droughts.

“In Papua New Guinea, and around the world, our people are dying as a consequence,” Mr. O’Neill said. “Living standards are being eroded and opportunity denied.”

“The world needs increased action now, to make further commitments to reduce emissions, and to help communities respond effectively to the climate change challenges,” he added.

Noting the challenges facing [refugees and migrants](#) around the world, Mr. O’Neill also called for a “more sensible and humane” approach to mobility, noting that more people will be dislocated in the future by natural disasters and the loss of livelihoods.

[Full statement available here](#)



John Silk, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Marshall Islands, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

In the same vein, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Marshall Islands underscored that the science behind climate is very real and urged that global confidence in the Paris Agreement must not waver in the face of any short-term challenges.

“The Paris Agreement is only as strong as the political confidence which stands behind it – and it is beyond imperative that, even in these early moments, committed nations are starting the challenging task of pushing ourselves to do even more,” said Minister John Silk.

In his address, the Minister also underscored the importance of the Sustainable Development Goal, and in particular, Goal 14, on the conservation and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

Also in his remarks, Mr. Silk expressed condemned the recent nuclear and missile tests conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), adding that he is appalled by the threat of an atmospheric nuclear test over the Pacific Ocean.

[Full statement available here](#)