

## **Fighting for the next 1,000 years: how young Pacific islanders are experiencing climate change**

Six young people from the Pacific islands are coming to Bonn to call for more action on mitigating climate change. What feels like a distant issue to us here in Europe is already having a major impact on those living in the Pacific. Every child there is very familiar with extreme weather events like cyclones, drought, and flooding. The next generation is growing up with the gloomy feeling that time is running out because, as sea levels rise, the ocean is eating up more and more land while drinking water becomes scarce. But this younger generation is also particularly committed to doing something about the situation. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is giving six young people from Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, the Marshall Islands, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu a chance to have their say at the 2017 UN Climate Change Conference. As part of the Pacific Voices in Unison project, the group is travelling to Bonn to raise awareness of the impact of climate change on their homes and to show how they are addressing these challenges. To help get their point across, they have produced video clips capturing the thoughts of their fellow Pacific islanders. 'Don't underestimate climate change, it's a huge problem,' urges one young person, 'but don't underestimate us as a people either. We've been living here for thousands of years, and we're going to fight to stay another thousand.'

On behalf of the German Government and the European Union, GIZ is working with 15 governments of the Pacific Community (SPC) to better protect people from the effects of climate change and help them adapt to these impacts in their everyday lives. One focus has been on cooperation with the education ministries: 'We helped them integrate the issue of climate change into school curricula, ensuring children learn about it from an early age,' says Wulf Killmann, GIZ programme manager in Fiji. They learn how important it is to protect mangroves so they can shelter the coastline, and how using energy and other resources sparingly is good for the climate. 'We've created age-appropriate learning materials and trained teachers, enabling us to reach 300,000 children in 1,800 schools already,' says Killmann.

At GIZ's '**Our World – Our Future**' side event at the 2017 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 23) you will have the opportunity to talk to the six **young adults from the Pacific islands** about these issues. **Wulf Killmann, GIZ programme manager in Fiji**, will also be available for interviews.

**When?** 10 November 2017, 13:30 – 14:30

**Where?** **Climate Planet** in the Rheinaue Leisure Park

This is an interactive and open event that will enable dialogue and also allow the young adults from the Pacific island states to meet committed young Europeans. It will involve a screening of the videos produced by the Pacific Voices in Unison project. The event will be held in English and entry is free.

Contact and registration:

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More information: <https://www.giz.de/en/mediacenter/57967.html>

Background information on GIZ's work in the Pacific islands:

<https://www.giz.de/en/workingwithgiz/57747.html>

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