

Pacific Islands on the front line of climate change: UN chief

The concerns of the Pacific Islands, on the front line of climate change, are at the heart of the United Nations work, said Secretary-General António Guterres on Friday, at a meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum ([PIF](#)), an intergovernmental organization, which holds [UN Observer](#) status.

The meeting, at UN Headquarters in New York, comes shortly after the organization's annual summit, in Nauru on 3-6 September, which reaffirmed in an [official communiqué](#) known as the Boe Declaration, that "climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific."

Mr. Guterres said that, with [COP24](#) (the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) coming up in November, and the [UN Climate Summit](#) scheduled for September 2019, the world needs to urgently step up action, adding that: "Your voices and experiences are pivotal as we push for increased ambition around the globe."

The Secretary-General thanked the PIF for including climate change as a security issue at the Nauru summit: the Boe Declaration expands the PIF's concept of security to include "human security, humanitarian assistance, prioritizing environmental security and regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters and climate change."

He recognized the efforts of the PIF to prevent conflict, citing the leadership of Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Rick Hou, in taking forward peacebuilding priorities, and congratulating the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government on implementing the [Bougainville Peace Agreement](#).

The PIF has taken a robust, regional approach to the implementation of The [2030 Agenda](#) on Sustainable Development and the [SAMOA Pathway](#) (which outlines action to be taken by Small Island Developing States), an approach appreciated by the Secretary-General.

With several members of the Forum showing improved economic growth, and close to leaving the "Least Developed Countries" socio-economic bracket, the UN Chief stated the UN's commitment to supporting graduating countries on their sustained path to development and prosperity.

He also commended action by Forum States to end gender-based violence in the Pacific – strengthening women's political and economic participation and deepening women's rights – and continuing efforts to expand opportunities for young people in the region.

The Secretary-General concluded by thanking Pacific Island leaders for their support in the ongoing UN reform effort, promising to continue seeking their

inputs and perspectives, and making a personal commitment to work with them for a safer, more secure and prosperous future for the people of the Pacific region.

Forum leaders welcomed the Secretary-General's leadership on climate change, calling for the appointment of a Special Adviser on Climate Change and Security, to strengthen the global focus on climate change as a security risk.