

Interview opportunity for the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn

Fiji to preside over the UN Climate Change Conference (6-17 November 2017) – GIZ experts advise the island nations on adapting to the effects of climate change

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For island nations across the Pacific, the impacts of climate change have become a daily reality. The region's 11 million inhabitants are already coping with rising sea levels, more frequent tropical cyclones, extended periods of drought and flooding. Rising sea levels are already flooding homes in some parts of Fiji. On behalf of the German Federal Government and the European Union (EU), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is cooperating with 15 governments in the Pacific Community to better protect people from the impacts of climate change and to help them adapt to these changes in their daily lives.

Fiji, host of this year's UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, is hit particularly hard by rising sea levels. One of the nation's islands, Ono, has already lost over 15 metres of land. 'In communities such as Narikoso, some residents are ankle-deep in water when they go into their living rooms in the morning,' explains Wulf Killmann, GIZ Programme Manager in Fiji. Earlier attempts by the community to hold water back by building a protective wall or taking the initiative to move house have failed. With GIZ's support and the involvement of all stakeholders, the Government of Fiji is therefore planning a pilot project aimed at resettling the residents of the village. This project is a best-practice example for Fiji and other Pacific islands. GIZ is also helping develop a national resettlement plan intended as a model for other resettlements in Pacific island nations. Fiji will officially present this plan at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn. According to today's estimates, over 100 communities in Fiji alone will be forced to resettle due to rising sea levels.

GIZ is also assisting these communities in Fiji and on other Pacific islands in adapting to the impacts of climate change. 'This includes cultivating climate-adapted vegetables and using new agricultural and irrigation techniques in the fields,' explains Killmann. 'This will allow residents to secure their food supplies in the future.'

In order to better understand climate change and adapt to its impacts, it is important that the local population is well informed. To achieve this, GIZ has provided support to the education ministries of Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga to ensure that schoolchildren are aware of the issue. This includes teaching them about the vital role of mangroves in protecting coastlines and how conserving energy and other resources can benefit the climate. Special educational materials intended for children have been developed on the subject and teachers have received training on how to apply them in the classroom. 300,000 young people at over 1,800 schools are already using the materials to learn about climate change.

Our expert Wulf Killmann would be happy to speak to you in an interview on the subject.

A complete overview of GIZ's events and topics at the Climate Change Conference can be found at www.giz.de/klimakonferenz.

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