

Faith-based organisations – CAPP conference closing statement

Our presence here these past 2 days is an acknowledgement that sustainable development in the Pacific necessarily includes spiritual and religious dimensions. Spirituality is integral to the world views of peoples across the Global South, the Pacific included. It underpins the moral and social frameworks in which decision making and day to day life take place.

Faith communities are key in informing these world views, including the way we understand our own relationship with the natural world and our responsibilities to this planet we call home. Integrating this understanding with scientific and technological understanding regarding our world and its natural and human systems is key to engaging faith community members at the grass roots level in both mitigation and adaptation strategies with regard to Climate Change. Our strengths are in the area of spiritual knowledge regarding environmental stewardship, but access to information on scientific expertise, accessing appropriate government and other structures, services and education materials is frequently a challenge.

In light of this, and representing the diverse regional and local faith communities who work within and on behalf of local communities across the Pacific and building on the work of the National Faith Based Environment Stewardship Summit organised by the Ministry of the Environment in 2013, and in alignment with the Pacific Council of Churches 2016 Tokatoka Declaration on Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience we:

1. Call on Faith Based Organisations to fulfil their rightful collective role as prophetic voices to Governments and Civil Society in reminding people that we have a duty to restore and maintain the ecological balance of our shared home.
2. Call on Faith Community leaders to take active leadership in facilitating environmental stewardship at the community level and in prioritising environmental stewardship in religious education and mainstreaming it into religious structures.
3. Commit to improving access to relevant information and educational materials in accessible formats, including local languages, in collaboration with relevant Government and non-government bodies, and seek their cooperation in this endeavour.
4. Recommend and call for the establishment of regional and local platforms for inter faith collaboration on the deepening of our commitment to, and active participation in, our care for our common home.