

Climate Change Experience of Jai Ram, Community of Christ member in Fiji

{Shared at 2019 World Conference; very lightly edited}

My name is Jai Ram. I am from the Fiji Islands. Fiji Islands are composed of 300 islands, with two major islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. I want to share the bad news from the Fiji Islands. We are good people but the weather is affecting us badly

Number one is the climate change and the issues of the weather pattern changing.

Number one that I want to share today is there on the Islands, even our Fiji government has a very specified budget to move villages from the danger of rising sea level. And it is definitely affecting our country, and village after village, with hundreds of Fijians living in one village, or 200, some even up to 500 staying in the village and they are supposed to be moved into the upper ground. And when you move to the upper ground, the issues of water, security comes into place, building homes, roadworks and other activities. I'm talking about experience. I'm part of some organisation in Fiji, where we work very hard to support our villages.

Apart from that, some of our good land which was under cultivation has been swept out by salty water from the rising sea level. That is causing a great disturbance. There is a district called Navua, in that the old sea wall are falling because of the waves that come and bangs on the wall, and it actually is dropping all of the sea wall.

Again, the government does not have the money or resources to use millions of dollars to repair. We are looking for international assistance from the EU, the Asian Development Bank to get that work done. Even as I speak, right in front of our President's house, or a palace or mansion - it's a beautiful setting just near the city of Suva, our capital. And the Parliament House is not too far away. Over there too, the sea level is rising, and suppose if there is a tsunami, our whole of the Capital will be swiped out. Therefore, God is blessing us that we don't have tsunamis as such.

On talking about weather, our whole system of agriculture has been disturbed. Very quickly we may have too much rain which will cause floods, and will also bring hurricanes and other activities there. Therefore, what I'm saying here is that weather is definitely affecting us. So, these are some of the experiences that I bring first-hand to this group. Thank you.