

Climate science alarming, irrefutable: Kerry

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Residents waded through floods in Majuro Atoll, the capital of the Marshall Islands, on February 20, 2011. US Secretary of State John Kerry has said the evidence for climate change is beyond dispute but it is not too late for international action to prevent its worst impacts.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said Monday the evidence for climate change was beyond dispute but it was not too late for international action to prevent its worst impacts.

"The science is clear. It is irrefutable and it is alarming," Kerry told a [climate conference](#) in Majuro in the Marshall Islands in a video address from Washington.

"If we continue down our current path, the [impacts of climate change](#) will only get worse."

Kerry said without strong, immediate action, the world would experience threats to [critical infrastructure](#), regional stability, public health, [economic vitality](#), and the long-term viability of some states.

Washington's top diplomat was addressing [climate experts](#) meeting on the eve of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in the Marshall Islands, a low-lying nation where rising seas threaten to swamp many atolls.

"I stand with you in the fight against climate change," he pledged, adding the issue was a [global crisis](#) that was beyond one country to fix and needed urgent global action.

"If we act together, there is still time to prevent some of the worst impacts of climate change," he said. "But the people of the Pacific Islands know as well as anyone that we also need to prepare communities for the impacts that are already being felt."

Kerry is not attending the PIF, with Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell representing the United States instead.



John Kerry, pictured August 30, 2013 in Washington. The US Secretary of State has said the evidence for climate change is beyond dispute but it is not too late for international action to prevent its worst impacts.

Earlier, European Union Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard said the threat facing low-lying island nations showed that international action on the issue was overdue.

Hedegaard expressed concern that some countries may try to delay a 2015 deadline for implementing reductions in emissions and increasing reliance on [alternative energy sources](#).

She said Europe and the Pacific island nations would work together to push the international community to honour the deadline.

"We have to make a joint pressure to say the world is already more than

late (in addressing climate change)," she told the conference in the capital Majuro.

"2015 must be taken seriously."

Hedegaard said that even though the Pacific islands were not responsible for climate change, they were willing to accept tough emissions targets, making it difficult for other nations not to follow suit.

The 15 PIF nations include islands states such as Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshalls, where many atolls are barely a metre (three feet) above sea level and risk being engulfed by rising waters.

The PIF is set to finalise a "Majuro Declaration" on climate change this week, which aims to reinvigorate global efforts to contain global warming.

Tuvalu Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga said the situation was "dire" and the Pacific needed immediate action, not vague promises to do something a few years down the track.

"We need concrete action on the ground to save Tuvalu, Marshall Islands and Kiribati," he said.

"We have to send a very strong signal out of this panel and forum that we need a legally binding agreement (on greenhouse gas emissions)."

The plan is to then present the declaration to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at the General Assembly meeting in New York at the end of September, "to reenergise the international community".

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