

Pacific Islands Forum to hold virtual climate summit

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Pacific island leaders will hold a virtual summit next week to demand urgent worldwide action on climate change ahead of UN-brokered talks on the issue.

The Pacific's low-lying [island nations](#) are among the worst affected by [global warming](#), threatened by rising seas and increasingly extreme cyclones.

Tuvalu Prime Minister Kausea Natano said the Pacific Islands Forum—an 18-member regional grouping—had a duty to spur the world into meaningful action.

"With Pacific island nations on the frontline of the [climate](#) change crisis, our ongoing global leadership and advocacy is critical," he said.

Natano, who this year holds the role of PIF chairman, called a virtual meeting of Forum members on December 11 to articulate the regional leaders' demands.

The aim is to put pressure on world leaders who are holding a virtual meeting on Saturday, December 12, to discuss "high-ambition" goals on climate change.

The talks—co-hosted by the UN, Britain and France—coincide with the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Paris climate accord.

The landmark accord committed all nations to cap warming at two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels and encouraged them to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Natano said the PIF's virtual summit was a chance for members to provide updates on their progress and signal the Pacific's desire for "momentum and ambitious action" on [climate change](#).

"There is no doubt that our collective failure to act as a community will impact not just our current generations, but that of our children and all future generations," he said.

Renato Redentor Constantino, executive director of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities in Manila, said the PIF meeting could be uncomfortable for Australia and New Zealand.

Constantino said the climate response from the two wealthiest PIF members had been "hollow and ritualistic".

"Both like to think of themselves as benefactors in the Pacific but in reality, they act like troglodytes and arsonists," he said.

Constantino criticised Australia's ongoing support for coal and said New Zealand—which this week declared a "climate emergency"—continued to grow its [greenhouse gas emissions](#).

"By shirking from their climate responsibility, both are fanning flames that are consuming the Pacific's rapidly dwindling lifelines," he said.

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