

Fiji youth must be 'ambassadors for climate change fight', says NGO chief

By **PMC Editor** - April 20, 2017

Jenny Jiva, a Fiji student climate change activist, speaking in a Bearing Witness interview with PMC journalist TJ Aumua in Suva last year.

Video: PMC

By Repeka Nasiko in Lautoka

Fiji's youth should become active ambassadors in the fight against climate change, says a leader of a rural non-government organisation.

Addressing University of Fiji students during the institute's climate change awareness programme this week, Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprise and Development (FRIEND) local associate director Dr Jone Hawea backed Fiji's COP23 co-host role.

"If our youths unite and be active ambassadors in the fight against climate, we can ensure that our prime minister is speaking on behalf of say 90 percent of the population," he said.

"The population of the country does not matter, the proportion of the population standing behind our prime minister and raising their voices on climate change, is what matters."

Dr Hawea said Fiji's COP 23 role offered a unique opportunity for all Fijians to influence international policies on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

"And we should take full advantage of it as it would have significant impacts on grassroots levels.

"Now that the Prime Minister, Voreqe Bainimarama, has taken the bold step, it means that we now have an opportunity which may not come again, to influence international policies which we know for a fact eventually filters down to our communities."

Dr Hawea added that work at the grassroots level would not make as much impact if policies did not change.

"If we are going to concentrate a lot on doing things at the ground level and the policies do not evolve, the work would not be so significant.

"At the international arena, we could tell them to change policies that may be affecting us, amend policies to benefit the countries in climate change adaptation and mitigation."

The student interactive seminar session was the first awareness session hosted by Fiji University's School of Science and Technology at the Saweni campus in Lautoka, western Fiji.

Dr Jone Hawea ... grassroots efforts need policy changes. Image: FRIEND

Repeka Nasiko is a Fiji Times reporter.

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PMC Editor

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Duty editor of the Asia Pacific Report/Evening Report collaboration or the Pacific Media Centre at the Auckland University of Technology. Feedback: [Email the editor](#)



