

COP29 fails on climate justice for vulnerable nations, says Caritas Australia

Caritas Australia has expressed disappointment at the outcomes of COP29, where commitments to climate finance have fallen short of addressing the urgent needs of vulnerable nations, particularly in the Pacific.

A \$1.3 trillion global climate finance goal was announced, but only \$300 billion of this is a commitment from the developed world, leaving a \$1 trillion annual shortfall to be filled by private finance. This approach risks worsening economic vulnerability in developing nations already facing the brunt of the climate crisis alongside sizeable overseas debt repayments.

The announcement also builds on an unfortunate history of poor climate finance. Back in 2009 countries agreed on a climate finance goal of jointly mobilising \$100bn per year by 2020, a goal that was met slightly later than anticipated in 2022. At that time, \$100 billion accounted for just 0.1% of global GDP, which sat at [\\$100 trillion](#). Despite this, much of the finance still came in the form of profit-making loans instead of grants.

Damian Spruce, Advocacy Associate Director at Caritas Australia said, "This year's COP was meant to deliver on finance for vulnerable nations, but instead it risks perpetuating a cycle of debt and inequality. Much of the developing world is forced to borrow to cover climate impacts they did not cause. It is unjust and unsustainable, and this private finance focussed goal will do little to address that."

Caritas Australia's report, [Weathering the Storm](#), launched at COP29 and highlights a \$1 billion gap in climate finance for the Pacific region. It also shows that nations like Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga are burdened by debt service-to-revenue ratios of around 15 percent, which undermines their ability to fund essential services like healthcare and education.

The report called for an increase in climate finance in addition to official aid, delivered as grants, not loans, via a UN vehicle rather than banks. It also asks for a response to the sovereign debt crises, allowing for the cancellation or restructuring of unsustainable and illegitimate debts, alongside better assessments, more transparency and greater protections for vulnerable countries.

"We are calling on the global community to honour the principles of justice, solidarity, and care for our common home, as outlined in *Laudato Si'*. This means wealthy nations stepping up with fair and effective climate finance that genuinely addresses the needs of vulnerable communities. With the Pacific on our doorstep the Australian government also has a responsibility to show leadership on this movement towards greater ecological and financial justice" Damian Spruce concluded.

To support climate vulnerable communities via Caritas Australia's programs, visit www.caritas.org.au/climatecrisis or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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