



Speak up Pacific activist, Paula Tuilagivou, leads protesters against deep sea mining in Germany

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Spotlight on us

Pacific makes waves at WCC

MARCHING through Karlsruhe, Germany, Pacific youth took the dangers of Deep Sea Mining to the international stage. With the support of the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), regional youth at the 11th World Council of Churches Assembly spread the message on the need for a moratorium on mining of the seabed. With the Pacific Conference of Churches, PANG has

maintained that mining of the seabed is dangerous and will have an enormous negative impact on the environment. "There has been insufficient research on mining methods and its effects but if extractive industry on land is anything to go by, extraction from the seabed will be a disaster," said activist Paula Tuilagivou, "The WCC Assembly allowed us to show the world that mining

will affect small Pacific island countries and harm the environment and people." Tuilagivou said he was encouraged by the number of assembly participants who showed a genuine concern over the effects of mining. "We need to harness this support and influence Pacific governments to ban seabed mining for the sake of our people," he said.

Easier access to our website



WE'RE making access to our website easier with the development of a QR code so that users can scan their way into our on-line communications. As we develop further, there will be links to material which churches and educators can use in the areas of climate change, gender and child protection, climate change and general information about our member churches. We're also working on bringing on-line, hundreds of papers and books on regional history an ecumenism for use by students and researchers. We welcome your comments.



International worship Mereani Nawadra of the PCC with women at the 11th WCC Assembly

End the violence

INROADS made in the Pacific women to end violence against women was a feature of the 11th World Council of Churches Assembly.

Delegates learned about measures taken in the region and the role of churches to make communities safer for women.

These included discussions by women theologians to create a theology to address violence as a sin.

And there were discussions on a pioneering move in the Pacific

to determine how well women were treated in churches and the community.

Known as the Gender Status Card, the programme supported by UN Women will determine what further measures must be taken to reduce and end violence.

This will involve a baseline survey conducted by Pacific Conference of Churches member churches to determine the status of women against internationally accepted standards. Once the status of

women in a particular church is known, programmes can be implemented to make improvements. The PCC was represented at the assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, by Reverend Sierra Bird, Anareta Apole and Mereani Nawadra of the Gender Desk.

International delegates heard that the PCC had undertaken a wide-ranging pilot study and training programme with UN Women before the system was developed, It will be rolled out shortly.

Youth take lead role



THE Pacific was on display everywhere at the World Council of Churches 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany. During praise and worship events or advocacy marches,

young church members from Fiji, Maohi Nui, Solomon Islands and Tonga were involved, In fact they were in huge demand, being asked to sing and dance in support of issues ranging from climate change to indigenous rights, a ban on nuclear weapons, deep sea mining

and self-determination. They also helped to host an informal kava session at which Pacific church elders met to share ideas and strategies ahead of the main assembly plenaries.

Talanoa Toktok

Pihaatae represents Pacific



World leaders Pihaatae (third from left) with WCC regional presidents

Dignity is key

What inspires you most about taking on this important role within the WCC?

Rev. Pihaatae: I have been in an ecumenical journey of faith since 1995, and also served as a former general secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches from 2013-2018. I think it is time to move to an international level as God's will. Also, in serving at the WCC as an international forum, I think it is the right place to move the Pacific issues at the global level.

What are your greatest concerns in the Pacific?

Rev. Pihaatae: The greatest concerns for people in the Pacific include the self-determination and human dignity of West Papua, Maohi Nui and Kanaky. We are also focused on climate justice and the impacts of the sea level rise on the lowline atolls. We are seeking compensation from the French State for the victims of the 193 nuclear tests done in Moruroa and Fagataufa.

And we are gravely concerned about the project of big international companies for seabed mining in the Pacific that will destroy our main source of life.

How will the WCC 11th Assembly help move you forward on the path of reconciliation and peace in the Pacific?

Rev. Pihaatae: The WCC has already done much for the churches in the Pacific, and with the many insights, resources, and materials we gain during the assembly through the thematic plenaries, Bible studies, morning and evening worship, and daily sharing at the tables, the workshops, and home groups, we feel empowered to start our mission right after the assembly. The only thing we need from WCC is the pastoral accompaniment of our member churches through human resources, and also if possible, to move our mission forward in our region on the path for reconciliation and peace.

REVEREND Francois Pihaatae is the Pacific regional president of the World Council of Churches.

He is one of seven regional presidents elected until the 12th assembly.

Pihaatae is head of the Etartetia Porotetani Maohi (French Polynesia) and is a former General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches.

He has been instrumental in the fight for justice for victims of nuclear testing in the Pacific. Freedom in West Papua and Kanaky (New Caledonia) have also been high on his agenda.

Pihaatae is a graduate of the Pacific Theological College, Suva.

"I thank God for this wonderful and very unique moment in our lives," Pihaatae said after his election.

"The world, through the WCC assembly, has come together and been inspired by God's Spirit where we share our joys, our pains, our angers, and at the same time find common ground so we can help each other in doing mission in our own context."

