

## BLOG FOR PARIS COP21 - Number 2

Finally in Paris, having finally caught up with Fr Nigel Kelaepa in Sydney. It has been an easy journey for me: lots of border crossings, but show my Australian passport, and it is usually just "welcome". But every time Fr Nigel crosses a border he has to show all his travel documents and tickets and invitations and undergo an extensive interrogation. Such is life for a Solomon Islander when travelling, as they have an "exotic" passport and don't look like wealthy Europeans. And whilst Australian immigration in Brisbane recognise a Solomon Islander, such is not the case further afield. Indeed, we now work on the basis that Fr Nigel goes ahead of me in the queue at immigration, so that I can step in and give further documents and reassurance as needed! I admire Nigel's perseverance and good humour - most Australians would have spat the dummy if given the treatment he is given when travelling. But finally through the last passport check, the last border before Paris, at St Pancras Station in London - the picture shows Fr Nigel ready to board.



But this points out part of the problem for Pacific Islanders - if basic travel is so expensive (Fr Nigel's travel to Paris cost over two years' salary for him); and travel is so difficult, then how are Pacific Islanders going to take part in the debate over climate change? And before you say, "use the internet", remember that internet access in the Pacific Islands is very slow and patchy - last time I was in the Solomons it was impossible to send an e-mail with an attachment of over 1 MB. The truth is that the voices of the Pacific Islanders is not heard, and cannot be heard unless they are present. Yet they are the ones who are suffering now from Climate Change. So Fr Nigel is now in Paris, and is ready to talk on behalf of his people.

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