



**PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**  
**United Nations Member States**

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations  
800 Second Avenue, Suite 400A, New York, N.Y. 10017

Phone: 212-937-0074  
Fax: 212-937-0079  
E-mail: [nauru@un.int](mailto:nauru@un.int)

**Statement by**  
**H.E. Ms. Marlene Moses**  
**Permanent Representative**

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the**  
**United Nations**

**on behalf of the**

**Pacific Small Island Developing States**

**to introduce draft resolution**

**A/63/L.8/Rev.1**

**“Climate change and its possible security implications”**

**under**

**Agenda item 107:**

**Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit**

**New York, 3 June 2009**

Check against delivery

## Introduction:

Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) represented at the United Nations, namely the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu, and my own country, Nauru.

It gives me great honour to be here today to introduce our Resolution: '*Climate Change and its possible security implications*', contained in document A/63/L.8/Rev.1.

Mr. President,

The co-sponsors of this Resolution, during the course of the past year, have involved the international community in extensive discussions on the security implications of climate change. We appreciate very much the support we have received from the members of the international community. Our particular gratitude goes to our cosponsors and to Indonesia who helped find a compromise text which will advance the international discussions on the matter of "*Climate change and its possible security implications*". In light of the introduction of L.8/Rev.1 we hereby withdraw A/63/L.8, entitled "*Security and climate change*".

We thank as well the Like-minded group and the other active participants in the informal negotiations. They have all helped to enrich the discussion on this issue and have been instrumental in constructing this text.

Mr. President,

Our special thanks go out to you for your help in advancing our issues and for convening this groundbreaking meeting of the General Assembly. We stand here at a historic moment -- a confluence of "firsts." This is both the first resolution for the PSIDS and the first General Assembly resolution on the security implications of climate change.

Mr. President,

To understand the backdrop of the draft resolution, I wish to briefly talk first about the Pacific, a region which has been relentlessly threatened by the adverse impacts of climate change.

The islands of the PSIDS range from Nauru, the world's smallest island nation, covering only 21 square kilometers, to Papua New Guinea, the second largest island in the world covering about 309,000 square kilometers. Tuvalu, made up of four reef islands and five true atolls, is only 26 square kilometers. Tuvalu is the fourth smallest country in the world and is only one tenth the size of Washington D.C. There can be no doubt that most of our islands are very tiny indeed.

The vulnerability of our islands results from the small size of our homelands coupled with the volume of the great Ocean that surround us. Scientists have predicted that this Ocean will continue to rise at an increasing rate. The Pacific Ocean in which we have lived for centuries will eventually leave little of our homelands behind if urgent action is not taken.

Mr. President,

May I reiterate the sentiments of the UN Secretary-General at the meeting of the Pacific Forum Leaders in Niue wherein he stated: '*Climate Change is not science fiction [...] it is real and present.*'

While it is anticipated that most nations will ultimately suffer from the adverse impacts of climate change, small island states, including PSIDS, are already grappling with dire and immediate impacts today. The impacts on our nations include the inundation of coastal areas, where the majority of our people live; the submergence of islands; loss of freshwater supplies; saltwater intrusion; flooding; drought; damaged crops and failure of agriculture; diminution of biodiversity; destruction of critical infrastructure; and a substantial increase in the incidence of serious diseases. In many cases, these impacts will ultimately render Pacific island nations uninhabitable, destroying our unique and ancient cultures.

As the rest of the world continues to debate the security implications of climate change, for our peoples the problem is astoundingly real. And whilst some countries may have the resources to mitigate and transfer their people to safety during times of natural disasters, we do not have this luxury. Our citizens, literally, have nowhere to run. Communities on drowning islands throughout the Pacific are faced with a looming homelessness crisis due to rising sea levels. For some, the only viable option is to migrate. While many have already relocated, more are expected to follow as more of our islands eventually submerge.

Imagine a country submerging as a whole; consider its territorial sovereignty, its population, and its government. These are fundamental considerations which, under international law, define ones status as a "State." Some of our Pacific countries are in danger of losing their populations and their land as a whole. They will cease to be "States". Never before has a UN member state disappeared now we are faced with the threat of losing many due to the adverse effects of climate change.

Consider a country which has been deeply affected by severe drought, which can no longer sustain itself because its hydropower is non-operational, and its drinking water is non-existent; a country which can no longer produce crops to feed its people. Consider a country that has been washed too often by floods and other natural disasters which have taken away every bit of hope that they have of their future. It is important to realize that there will come a time when no amount of aid will be able to insulate countries from the impacts of climate change. We will all suffer now or later. No country is immune from the impacts of climate change and the smallest of the SIDS will be the first.

Mr. President,

Clearly, the survival of states, their sovereignty and territorial integrity and the impact on their neighbors are a matter of international peace and security.

The melting of glaciers and the warming of the atmosphere and the oceans will have wide-ranging effects. Droughts, floods and other forms of extreme weather will become more frequent, threatening food supplies. Plants and animals which cannot adjust will die out. Sea levels are rising and will continue to do so, forcing hundreds of thousands of people in coastal zones to migrate.

Recent climate studies have shown that the pace of climate change is increasing and the effects are sometimes worse than predicted. In only the past 4 years, scientists have revised predictions of an ice-free summer Arctic Ocean from 2105 (National Science Foundation) to 2070 (University of Cambridge) to 2039 (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to 2013 (Naval Postgraduate School). Terrifyingly, some climactic studies have begun to suggest that the IPCC's worst-case scenarios may be too conservative. These trends indicate we may be facing a climate emergency far sooner than we thought. Addressing the security implications of climate change is overdue and the time to act is now.

Mr. President,

Against this background, let me now introduce the Resolution.

### **1. The Resolution:**

#### **Objective**

The resolution is simple and genuine. First and foremost, it refers to the security implications of the adverse impacts of climate change, which in our region are already being felt. Resettlements are already underway in the Pacific. The adoption of the resolution will not only prove that we are seriously concerned about the global environment but more importantly that we are seriously concerned about the survival of whole populations and the existence of their lands, from which they derive their sense of belonging and identity.

#### **Terms of the Resolution**

The Resolution looks at the adverse effects of climate change in a holistic manner. It points to the relevant resolutions in Second Committee as well as the Purposes of the United Nations enshrined in Article 1 of our Charter. It further reiterates the roles of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Security Council. The resolution also recalls the relevant UN frameworks in the field. The UNFCCC, the Barbados Program of Action, the Mauritius Declaration, the Mauritius Strategy, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome provide the framework for the resolution.

The preambular part of the resolution closes simply with a factual statement, namely that “the adverse impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, could have possible security implications”. As I have already pointed out, these implications are already being felt in our islands.

The draft resolution then invites all relevant organs of the United Nations to intensify their efforts in considering and addressing climate change. Read in connection with preambular paragraph 3, it becomes obvious that the General Assembly and ECOSOC need to increase their efforts to address sustainable development issues as they relate to climate change. It is also clear that the Security Council has the responsibility to look at the security aspects, a view that we fully endorse.

Finally, the Resolution calls for a comprehensive report to be submitted to the 64<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly on the possible security implications of climate change. It is particularly important that this report is based on the views of member states and the relevant regional and international organizations. This report will be the first by the Secretary-General to collect information on the security implications of climate change. We see this report as a critical first step as we move forward on this issue.

## **2. Conclusion**

Mr. President,

The disappearance of Pacific Islands is now projected to happen within our lifetime if we continue with business as usual. Conflicts are already being exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change and matters will only become worse. The planet will not wait patiently for further debates on the political matter of this subject.

We are of the firm view that the adverse impacts of climate change have very real implications for international peace and security. We believe that the time is now opportune for all the organs of the United Nations to work collectively within their mandates and intensify their efforts. The lives of real people from real places are at stake. The future survival of real generations, the continuation of real cultures, and the security of belonging to a real homeland are being threatened.

Mr. President,

Given the importance of the issue, it is my hope that A/63/L.8/Rev.1 be adopted by consensus.

Thank you.