



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES
United Nations Member States

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STATEMENT

FOR THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE

**OPEN WORKING GROUP (OWG)
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)**

ON THE

THEMATIC ISSUE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

DELIVERED BY

**H.E. MR CALEB OTTO,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF PALAU TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON BEHALF OF THE PACIFIC TROIKA TO THE
OWG ON SDGs**

AND

**ON BEHALF OF PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (PSIDS)
REPRESENTED AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

9 JANUARY 2014, NEW YORK

“Check against delivery”

Co-Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of the Pacific Troika in the OWG on SDGs; namely Nauru, Papua New Guinea and my own country, Palau. This intervention is also made on behalf of the 9 other Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) represented at the UN, namely, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

We associate ourselves with the statement on this segment's cluster of issues on climate change and disaster risk reduction to be made by our Pacific colleague of Nauru, as AOSIS Chair.

Except for our PSIDS members who are not G77 members, others in our group also align themselves with the Statement made by the newly inaugurated distinguished Chair of G77 and China - Bolivia.

We thank the Technical Support Team (TST) for the informative background notes for this session. Likewise, our commendation also goes to the keynote speakers and panelists for their insightful and thought provoking presentations on these highly important thematic issues now under consideration.

Co-Chair,

Climate change is the gravest threat to the sustainable livelihoods, wellbeing, viability, security, and sovereignty of our respective countries.

And we agree with the TST report and other speakers today that climate change and disaster risks are fundamental concerns of mutual interest to the whole international community in the context of sustainable development.

So, whilst we respect the mandates of other bodies like the UNFCCC to tackle climate change and disaster risk reduction, we believe that these are among the most salient issues and that they must also be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda, and the SDGs in particular. A global development agenda that ignores climate change would be unacceptable.

Overwhelming scientific consensus such as that highlighted by the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report speaks to slow-onset events impacting on sustainable development for the international community.

Escalating greenhouse gas emissions over the past century have resulted in degraded land fertility, lowered agricultural production, and reduced biodiversity. The alarming acidification of our oceans and seas is impacting the health of the marine ecosystem and continues to threaten our food security and economic viability. The rapid loss of polar sea ice and sea-level rise challenge our sovereignty as nations. The striking and increasing incidences of more frequent and extreme weather events are damaging our limited infrastructure and posing health hazards for our people. Combined, the effects of climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions are seriously threatening our sustainable future.

These are the harsh realities that we, as SIDS, continue to face in seeking to sustainably develop. That is why the PSIDS, at the national, regional and at our recent inter-regional meeting last August in Barbados and in September in Majuro respectively, have decided to recommit to address our serious sustainable development concerns under the ambit of internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs, the Rio-Plus 20 outcome, and particularly through the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation; leading up to and beyond the Third International Conference on SIDS in Samoa in September 2014.

Co-Chair,

We also recognize that SIDS contribute the least to climate change yet continue to bear the brunt of its impact. We alone cannot overcome these existential threats. We therefore welcome and urge the international community to unite with us and assist us to mitigate and adapt to the challenges posed by climate change and disasters for our sustainable future.

It is in this spirit that we therefore call on this intergovernmental process to recognize that climate change and disaster risk reduction are cross-cutting issues. They could be addressed as targets and indicators under certain overarching sustainable development agenda, as highlighted in the TST report.

For instance, under an extreme poverty eradication goal, a climate change target could be for all countries to attain a globally agreed standard minimum low carbon economy status. The target should also account for the different stages of respective countries development.

Indicators for such a target could include national land policies and legislation to promote best practices in sustainable agriculture, eradicate corruption related to land issues; transfer of environmentally friendly technology for agriculture and economic development; and build national capacity and capabilities through technical assistance, training and institutional strengthening.

Similarly, under a possible sustainable or renewable energy goal, the climate change targets could include countries to be carbon neutral by a globally agreed timeline. Indicators for this target could comprise phasing out fossil fuel under national legislation and policies; transfer of appropriate technology that is eco-friendly; and streamline, simplify and harmonize processes to access international finance for energy neutral development that facilitates adaptation, mitigation and risk reduction.

Co-Chair,

In the context of the Pacific SIDS own proposal for a dedicated goal on oceans and seas, we envisage that climate change and disaster risk reduction can be incorporated under the target of achieving a healthy marine environment.

This would encompass conservation of a proportion of coastal and marine protected areas of particular importance to biodiversity and ecosystem service. It would also seek to address the impact of ocean acidification on marine and coastal ecosystem and resources, in particular coral reefs and mangroves, by enhancing their resilience.

In conclusion, **Co-Chair**, we again applaud the commendable progress made thus far in the OWG on SDGs as well for the inclusive, balanced, fair and transparent manner in which the inter-governmental process is managed under the leadership of the Co-Chairs and recommit ourselves to work with both Co-Chairs and other stakeholders.

I thank you.