

FORUM: Sustainable Development Commission

QUESTION OF: Battling Rising Sea Levels: Saving the Pacific

SUBMITTED BY: Egypt

CO-SUBMITTERS: Andorra, UNCTAD, China, Kazakhstan, Colombia, Spain, Indonesia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Cape Verde, Venezuela, Yemen, Barbados, LAO PDR, Somalia, Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Philippines, Slovenia, Australia, Ireland, ECA, Jamaica, Ecuador, Estonia, World Health Organisation, Cote d'Ivoire, UNDP, Algeria, Czech Republic, Pakistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia

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Reaffirming its commitment to the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and its emphasis on “the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including the oceans” and establishing multilateral solutions that mitigate the effects of climate change for all people,

Concerned that the currently projected over-4 C increase in temperature would, according to the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, irrevocably alter ocean currents and cause an increase in global sea levels by 20-50 cm, which would wholly or partially submerge many nations around the world, particularly island nations in the Pacific Ocean,

Noticing that this change is directly connected to the combustion of fossil fuels, use of Heavy Fuel Oils (HFOs) in Arctic shipping, destruction of vitally important marine ecosystems such as coral reefs which prevent erosion and further ocean acidification and sequester carbon dioxide, and the large carbon emissions contribution, over 70% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, of the transportation sector,

Recognizing the resulting distress on safe water and food access for Pacific Island nations,

Believing in the abilities and impact of individuals united in taking action by asking power companies to send renewable energy to their homes, turning off lights when not in use, commuting by bike or foot, adopting a plant-based diet, or a variety of other measures, which, according to an article in the journal BioScience reviewed and signed by 11,000 climate scientists, is vital to stopping climate change,

Understanding that, in order to immediately delay the adverse effects of rising ocean levels on the submergence of island nations, sea walls, such as the Thames Barrier in the United Kingdom, and smaller projects to raise and strengthen building foundations will be necessary regardless of what action is taken to mitigate climate change,

Admiring the efforts of a variety of Pacific island nations in mitigating and adapting to climate change,

Further understanding that a comprehensive solution to rising sea levels both mitigates the exacerbation of climate change and adapts affected communities to handle it,

1. Calls for all member states to direct their attention towards the pressing issue of climate change and the effect of rising sea levels on Pacific Small Island Developing States, sign the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 if they have yet to do so, reaffirm their commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015, and reassess their Nationally Determined Contributions;
2. Mobilizes the United Nations’ public relations and social media outreach, in coordination with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to inform people around the world about what they can do to combat climate change, such as:
 - a) Encouraging and advising campaigns that:

- i. inform citizens about the effects of rising sea levels,
 - ii. educating citizens about ways in which they can mitigate climate change through recycling, conserving energy, and more under the discretion of participating Member States,
 - b) Adding on to current national syllabi so that they include modules targeted at changing youth mindsets towards climate change by ways such as but not limited to:
 - i. addressing fads in the media with regards to the issue so as to alleviate the effects of fear-mongering,
 - ii. clarifying the scale of the impact that changes to one's lifestyle could have on mitigating the effects of climate change;
3. Incentivizes member nations and corporations to limit greenhouse gas emissions, finance research into potential climate change mitigation solutions, invest in renewable energy, especially geothermal, hydropower, and biomass (digester gas), consider ways to conserve energy, divest and transition from fossil fuels, and aid in the construction and spread of natural and artificial carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas sequestration infrastructure; such incentives include:
 - a) reducing member-nations' dues for a period of 1 year at a rate of 0.05% should they meet UN-approved standards,
 - b) providing nations and corporations with informational and some monetary resources for sustainable adaptation and development,
 - c) partnering with Consumers International, an international consumers rights organization, to create a Certification of Climate Change Sustainability for companies to use on products and advertisements;
 4. Encourages the creation of the Polar Ice Protection League (PIPL) among member nations to prioritize the mitigation of further polar habitat and ice destruction; the PIPL will fund research on melting sea ice and use the results to recommend steps that can be taken to limit further destruction of ice and will be enforced by PIPL member states and ban the use of HFOs as a fuel for ships in member nations and encourage the use of alternatives, such as distillate fuel and liquefied natural gas (LNG);
 5. Engages in partnerships with cities and towns around the world to partially fund, establish, and/or renovate low-cost public bike-sharing initiatives and public transportation and with vehicle companies to subsidize electric vehicles; such subsidies and partnerships will be negotiated, provided, and overseen by the United Nations Sustainable Transport Conference and the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development;
 6. Establishes the Pacific Sea Level Rise Adaptation Fund to issue grants to nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for a variety of sea level rise adaptation projects, including, but not limited to sea and flood wall construction, marine and mangrove ecosystem restoration to minimize erosion and reestablish coral population and ensure the longevity of barrier reefs, and projects which raise building foundations and strengthen them from sea level rise and build islands through dredging and land reclamation; the Pacific Sea Level Rise Adaptation Fund will be run by a Board of experts from government, business, and academia and will provide grants based on a viability and cost-effect analysis of each project;
 7. Works in cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum to establish a unified effort among Pacific Island nations with the resources of the United Nations for the purpose of sea level rise adaptation:
 - a) work in cooperation with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development to ensure the stability of the food supply and economy of Pacific Island nations
 - b) work in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization to ensure the preservation and longevity of Pacific Island culture
 - c) work in cooperation with the World Health Organization to expand water filtration

infrastructure to combat the water-borne diseases and increasing water salinity and construct greatly needed medical infrastructure

- d) work in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to:
- i. develop an early warning and monitoring system for Pacific Island Nations
 - ii. create a Climate Emergency Refugee Action Plan for Pacific Island nations and as a framework for instances of climate refugee crises to come (and secure that the inhabitants are fully informed about this plan, by measures such as; Posters, campaigns, education)
 - iii. prepare other member nations to receive climate refugees, especially in labor and residential sectors, in the event that their former home is rendered uninhabitable by rising sea levels
 - iv. ensure the equitable treatment and cultural survival of these refugees.