



Papua New Guinea
Mr. Fred S. [Name]
at the Sixth Committee of the
UN General Assembly
of the International Law Commission
Chapter III on Sea-level Rise in relation to International
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Madam Chair, Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

This being the first occasion of my delegation's participation in this Committee's 76th session, I would like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, and your distinguished delegation as well as the respective Bureau members; Costa Rica, Egypt, Lithuania and Spain, for your mandates and the way in which you are steering our work and wish you all the best for the constructive support

We align our mandate with those made respectively by Fiji as the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Samoa as Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Chair, and Barbuda as the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Chair. In line with our national capacity, we would

It is most heartening to note that during the year's International Day of Ocean the topic of sea-level rise in relation to international law was the focus of many of the side events and this is a clear testament to the importance of this issue to the international community.

Madam Chair, my delegation is particularly pleased with the high level of engagement from the H.C. members, especially in the bilateral and with other non-UN entities such as, in our case, with the Tokelau Islands Forum on our ongoing work on the topic of maritime law in relation to international law. We have found this highly constructive and beneficial and would further encourage this good practice.

We also welcome and thank the H.C. members for their valued and instrumental work as reflected in the 72nd Session of the H.C. which has been undertaken under trying circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We note with special interest the H.C. Commission's report, *Chapter Nine of the Report*, which is a highly significant and useful guide to help us address the maritime issues in relation to international law.

We also look forward to the ongoing work of the study group members' voluntary studies on the origin and development of international law, practice and principles, including on sources of law, bilateral and multilateral treaties or other instruments, principles and rules of international law, practice and principles, and legal instruments.

Madam Chair, given that sea level rise is improving, and will continue to improve, coastlines and maritime features, the relationship between sea level rise and maritime zones, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), is a fundamental concern for Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guinea reaffirms its position that UNCLOS is the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas should be conducted.

For us, we recognise the need for a legal and regulatory framework that is predictable, transparent, and based on good governance, between States, and to avoid conflicts, which are essential to ensure that UNCLOS underpin UNCLOS and international law. By legal stability, we mean the need to preserve the baselines and other limits of maritime zones.

We further recognize that there are no provisions in UNCLOS that require the States to keep under review and update their maritime zones, once the relevant information has been deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in accordance with UNCLOS.

In this context, **Madam Côté**, we call attention to the landmark Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones and to the Declaration on the Law of the Sea, both issued by the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in July of August 2007.

We are pleased to note the interest of our Pacific Island neighbours in this regard and welcome the preliminary exchange of views.

We underscore that the Declaration's approach is firmly grounded in the primacy of UNCLOS as the emphyng legal order for the ocean, as a formal statement of the Rule of Law in the maritime domain.

Through this Declaration, Pacific Island States reaffirm their commitment to stability, security, continuity and predictability of maritime zones, in good faith interpretation of UNCLOS as it applies to the relationship between climate change-related sea level rise and maritime zones.

The Declaration proclaims that the Pacific Islands Forum Members' maritime zones, as established and notified to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in accordance with UNCLOS, continue to apply, without prejudice, until such time as they shall voluntarily apply, without prejudice, until such time as physical changes connected to climate change-related sea level rise.

Madam Côté, in light of the current view with respect to the current UNCLOS and the security, stability and predictability of maritime zones, the manner set out in the Declaration contributes to a just and timely response to climate change-related sea level rise.

We also had a very productive session with the High Level Panel of Experts (2022) under the Co-Chairmanship of Ms Patricia O'Leary and Mr. Joseph S. Stiglitz, in discussing the economic assessment of the impact of climate change on its programme of work, namely issues related to, *stratēgia* and the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise.

These are also issues of high importance to the people of the region, and our ongoing daily lived reality of our people in the region.

We have also been very active in our work with the High Level Panel of Experts and other stakeholders, before the end of this year, in the stream of the 2022 Informal High Level Panel of Experts meeting, in discussing the impact of climate change by sea-level rise in the context of sea-level rise in the region.

In this context, we are working together with other members of the Pacific Islands Forum to make a joint declaration on the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise.

Madam Chair, in closing, and going forward, Papua New Guinea is highly interested in continuing to remain in a dialogue with the members of the critically important topic of sea-level rise in relation to international law.

Thank you!