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2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event



The Commonwealth
Blue Charter

TAIWAN



STIMSON



Islands of the Future: Blue Solutions and Highest Ambition on Climate Change

29 June 2022

Organized by: The Governments of Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Palau and St. Kitts & Nevis

Partners: Pacific Island Climate Action Network, The Stimson Center, Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund, OAC, The Commonwealth Secretariat

www.VanuatuCJ.com/UNOC

Background on the event:

Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Palau and St. Kitts and Nevis highlighted solutions for addressing the climate crisis in small island developing states: from a Pacific-led initiative that will bring climate change to the International Court of Justice, to securing maritime boundaries in the face of SLR, to upscaling climate finance to vulnerability assessments. Partners like the Pacific Climate Action Network, The Stimson Center, Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund and The Commonwealth Secretariat are working closely with SIDS government.

The event included high-level panellists, including Vanuatu's Minister of Climate Change, Hon. Silas Bule Melve, Tuvalu's Secretary to Government Dr Tapugao Falefou, Palau's Permanent Representative of Palau to the United Nations, Ilana Seid and St Kitts & Nevis's Conservation Officer Ms. Cheryl Jeffers, who shared share innovative research, tools, legal and diplomatic approaches for SIDS to take action to build coastal climate resilience.

The side event was aligned with UNOC Theme #5: Promoting and strengthening sustainable ocean-based economies, in particular for small island developing States and least developed countries

Key Issues discussed

- Climate change is the single greatest threat affecting our oceans, livelihoods and fundamental human rights
- Sea level rise is encroaching on territorial sovereignty and leading to the disappearance of entire nations
- International Law can help to bring new ambition to the climate actions pledged and implemented by States
- Climate finance to SIDS must be scaled up, as only a fraction of current flows are reaching SIDS and for oceans and adaptation priorities
- Vulnerability is inherently difficult to assess, considering its cross-sector and dependent on factors at different scales

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Call on the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution requesting the International Court of Justice to provide an advisory opinion on the obligations of States under international law to protect the rights of present and future generations against the adverse effects of climate change.
- Secure international recognition of SIDS's statehoods as permanent and existing maritime boundaries as fixed despite the effects of sea level rise and climate change on land territories.
- Pursue various other efforts to develop customary international law on the retention of Statehood and maritime boundaries in the face of sea level rise so that these issues gain traction as recognized legal norms and become accepted standards in international law;
- Support Pacific regional and international efforts that align with national actions, such as promoting the Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise
- Amend the definitions of climate finance to capture only those flows that are truly dedicated to addressing climate change, as well as expand modalities for SIDS to access finance
- Expand the use of universal vulnerability indices to obtain global consensus on the definition and measurement of vulnerability

