



**Remarks by Ambassador Satyendra Prasad,
Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations**

“Water for Sustainable Development”

Stakeholder Consultation

New York, Tuesday 25 October 2022

President of the General Assembly,

Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Secretary of the UN
2023 Water Conference,

Distinguished Ambassadors of the Kingdom of Netherlands and Tajikistan,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues,

I commend you for convening this stakeholder consultation on preparations for the Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”.

Our Blue Pacific Continent has great interest in this important work.

The outcomes of the Mid-term Review and the Water for Sustainable Development conference will have decades-long positive and consequential implications for small island states such as Fiji if our efforts are successful.

However, if we are unsuccessful, we can only hasten their journey towards insecurity and substantial regression in human development.



We therefore warmly welcome the five themes for the Conference that have been proposed by the co-chairs.

We draw your attention to the unique, aggravated and profoundly urgent challenges that small states face in ensuring and maintaining access to water over the decades ahead in the face of relentless and runaway climate change.

Our Leaders have declared a climate emergency in our region. Their concerns around access to, security of, and the affordability of water have all been turbocharged by the climate crisis. The fundamental human right to water is threatened substantially by the Climate Emergency across our Blue Pacific Continent.

Prolonged drought impacts access to water, food security and health with devastating effects on our communities. The costs of shipping water across vast maritime distances during prolonged droughts is debilitating for small economies.

Climate change-related sea-level rise threatens salinity and fresh water sources on island after island – and nowhere more than on the atoll states. Too many of our islands have long run out of fresh water sources, triggering the displacement of peoples and at times, whole communities.

Climate change-related natural disasters threaten water infrastructure repeatedly and with greater intensity, requiring ever-increasing investments in rehabilitating and maintaining water infrastructure.

Responding to the scale of impact of these climate disasters is increasingly beyond the capacity of many states. The question then arises- does the United Nations have a coherent, actionable response to support SIDS to build water security and resilience?

We look to our co-hosts, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands to bring to the Conference new ways in which finance can be made available at speed and scale to small island states that face water crises in such profoundly aggravated ways.

As we look to Sharm El-Sheikh we know that keeping 1.5 alive is central to achieving a world where equitable, sustainable access to clean water is possible.



Fiji looks forward to the 2023 “Water for Sustainable Development” Conference, determined to focus global attention on the specific challenges of small island states where water security is so fundamentally threatened.

The 2023 Conference gives us a window to act. This window will close fast – Fiji offers its full support to the Co-Chairs and calls on member states to engage constructively for our shared benefit.

I thank you.

ENDS