



## **Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations**

### **United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**

#### **Interactive Dialogue 3: Water for Climate, Resilience, and Environment: Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience, and Disaster Risk Reduction**

**Intervention by Chairman of the Shared-Directors Boards, Utilities Sector  
Mr. Tapuvakai Panuve,**

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I am honored to be addressing this esteemed gathering on the critical issue of water and its impact on climate, resilience, and the environment. I bring you greetings from the people and government of Tonga, a small island developing state in the South Pacific that is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Tonga has a rich and diverse natural environment, but it is under threat from the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and extreme weather events. Water is a precious resource that plays a critical role in the resilience of our environment and the sustainability of our communities. It is essential that we work together to ensure the responsible management and conservation of this vital resource.

The Source to Sea approach is an effective strategy that recognizes the interconnectedness of water systems and their vital role in supporting life and ecosystems. Water resources need to be managed holistically, from their source in

watersheds and aquifers to their discharge into the sea. In Tonga, we are committed to implementing this approach to protect our valuable freshwater resources and the biodiversity they support.

Biodiversity is essential for the resilience of our environment and the sustainability of our communities. Healthy ecosystems provide essential goods and services, including food, water, medicine, and climate regulation. The loss of biodiversity threatens the stability of our ecosystems and our ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change. It is crucial that we take urgent action to protect and restore biodiversity in our water systems.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing our planet, and water is at the forefront of this challenge. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events are affecting the availability and quality of water resources. Tonga is committed to taking urgent action to mitigate and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We recognize the need for international cooperation and support to address this global challenge.

Disaster risk reduction is a critical component of our efforts to build resilience to the impacts of climate change. Tonga is highly vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather events, including cyclones and flooding and more recently, volcanic explosions and Tsunamis. We have taken significant steps to enhance our preparedness and response to disasters, but we recognize the need for continued support and cooperation to reduce the risks and impacts of these events.

In conclusion, the management and conservation of water resources are critical for the resilience of our environment and the sustainability of our communities. The Source to Sea approach, the protection of biodiversity, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and disaster risk reduction are essential components of our efforts to address the impacts of climate change. Tonga stands ready to work with our international partners to achieve these goals and to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

Thank you.