

# At UN Assembly, Pacific small islands urge collective action against climate change impacts

21 September 2017 – Addressing the 72nd annual general debate at the United Nations General Assembly, leaders from Pacific small Island developing states highlighted the growing impact of climate change on the lives of their people and called for concerted action to address the threat.

“As small island Pacific countries, we are no longer protected by our isolation,” said Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, the Prime Minister of Samoa, adding: “Climate change, like other global challenges, cross borders seamlessly. It has no respect for sovereignty and does not discriminate countries between rich or poor.”

“Its dire consequences are real including [for] those who remain in denial,” he underscored, urging global leaders to collectively prioritize the implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

Also in his address, Prime Minister Malielegaoi, spoke of the importance of the [2030 Agenda](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) and highlighted that, for small island development States, the 2014 ‘Samoa Pathway’ is their sustainable development roadmap which highlights their key tasks and priorities and links closely with the 2030 Agenda.

The Samoa leader also noted the escalating crisis in the Korean Peninsula and called for visionary leadership to ensure that peace is given a chance. Concluding his remarks, he also informed the General Assembly of the Summit of Leaders of discussions and outcomes at the Pacific Island Forum, which Samoa hosted earlier this year.

[Full statement available here](#)



President Tommy Esang Remengesau, Jr. of the Republic of Palau addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the general debate today, Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., the President of Palau, said the natural disasters wreaking havoc across many parts of the world are a “harbinger of wars to come on a hotter planet,” underscoring the need to the full implementation of the Paris Agreement.

“Palau in the Pacific have experienced, first hand, the impact of climate extremes,” he said, adding: “[Climate change impact] is a ticking time-bomb – no one knows when or where the next disaster will strike – but we are a keenly aware that it can wipe out years of progress in a span of hours.”

Noting the importance of expanding cooperation with all stakeholders, including with the private, public and non-profit sector, to address the complex challenges facing the planet, he added that UN is the crucial link that can bring global efforts together, and that concerted and united efforts are also crucial to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Concluding his address, President Remengesau also spoke of the need of strong multilateral efforts, within the UN framework, to resolve challenges ranging from international peace and security, global terrorism, large-scale migration and many other difficult issues.

For the success of such efforts, the UN system must be strengthened so that all its Member States can believe in the fairness and effectiveness of the overall international negotiation and dispute resolution process.



Prime Minister Enele Sosene Sopoaga of Tuvalu addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Joining the Pacific leaders expressing concern over the threat posed by climate change, Enele Sosene Sopoaga, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, also underscored the importance of the Paris Agreement, especially for the tens of millions living in low-lying islands and coastal areas around the world.

"The Paris Agreement is our common hope of a decent life on a sustainable planet. For Tuvalu, it is our hope of security and survival," said the Prime Minister, noting however, that the hope, is however, "dimmed with the announcement by the United States that it will abandon the Agreement."

In his remarks, the Prime Minister also highlighted the importance of the 2030 Agenda and referring to challenges within his country in its implementation, thanked the international community for their help in overcoming them.

He also expressed his country's support for a 'global pact on the environment,' explaining that it would be an international legally binding agreement on the protection of rights to a safe and clean environment.

"We are but on one canoe for humanity, no one country must jump ship! We either must paddle together to keep us afloat and safe. Or allow the canoe to sink, and we all drown. It is our hope, that with this 'Global Pact' and the Paris Agreement, the canoe, we can save Tuvalu, and if we can save Tuvalu we can save the world."

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Charlot Salwai Tabimasmamas of the Republic of Vanuatu addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also delivering his address before the General Assembly, Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas, the Prime Minister of Vanuatu stated that the United Nations offered the “best hope and catalyst” for addressing global challenges including those related to peace and security, as well as the environment problems.

In particular, he said that as the impact of climate change continues to grow unabated, world leaders must consider a legal framework to address the issue of climate change refugees, who would be left stranded once their homes and lands disappear.

In his remarks, the Prime Minister also called on Security Council to move beyond political interests of its members and to find compromise solutions. He also said that his country supports Security Council reforms to accord fairer regional representation.

Further in his address, Prime Minister Tabimasmas underscored the importance of implementation of the Paris Agreement and he urged the United States to reconsider its decision on the Agreement and to support its full implementation.

Turning to crisis emanating from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea nuclear weapons development programme, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his country’s commitment to denuclearization of the Pacific region and welcomed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

[Full statement \(in French\) available here](#)

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## **Boost regional cooperation, for the ‘sake of peace and prosperity,’ Belarus tells global leaders at UN**

**Boost regional cooperation, for the ‘sake of peace and prosperity,’ Belarus tells global leaders at UN**

21 September 2017 –

The past few decades have been fraught with two contradictory tendencies – enhanced political fragmentation and increased economic globalization, Belarus’ Minister for Foreign Affairs told the United Nations General Assembly today.

Vladimir Makei noted that the former has been associated with global political instability resulting from wars, conflicts, terrorism, xenophobia and other factors – giving rise to mounting chaos and despondency. This

predicament came about because there was no peace treaty to end the Cold War, as is usual in other major wars. "We were left without a universally accepted framework, which could have guided our subsequent behaviour," he explained.

"But it is never late to do what is right," continued Mr. Makei, pointing to the possibility of a negotiating process in which key global powers collectively strategize on building new constructive relations. "Agreements emanating from the dialogue would, essentially, put an end to the last epochal war," he explained, adding that the UN would have a role in its implementation.

While the second world tendency – increased economic globalization – has contributed to progress and economic development, it appears that the majority of the world's population did not benefit, especially over the last few decades. "As a result," said Mr. Makei, "we have not been able to eliminate poverty, while inequality has been steadily on the rise."

Belarus believes that regional integration is a key feature of the contemporary world, as it leaves less room for political fragmentation. While acknowledging that everyone might not agree on the importance of tightening cooperation among regional integration processes, Mr. Makei said "what, however, we are firmly convinced of is that it is high time for all of us to demonstrate urgency in action and cooperation for the sake of peace and prosperity."

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[UN General Assembly's annual debate to 'focus on people,' ensuring decent life for all](#)

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## [\*\*Peace and stability vital for sustainable development in a fragile world, Kazak leader says at UN Assembly\*\*](#)

21 September 2017 – Addressing the 72nd annual general debate at the United Nations General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan reiterated his country's commitment to sustainable development and urged global leaders to remain steadfast in their battle against climate change, including through the use of renewable energy.

In particular, noting that peace and stability are essential to ensure

sustainable development, Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov stated that the world does not have “the luxury of being able to make mistakes and then going back to correct them.”

“[Therefore] we call on all world leaders to redouble their efforts and goodwill to head towards lasting peace and prosperity for all,” he added.

Noting of the growing danger posed by nuclear weapons, the Minister condemned the actions of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) – the only State in the 21st century continuing nuclear weapons development programme despite condemnation from the entire international community and called on the country to take serious steps to recommit to a political resolution to the crisis.

In his address, he noted the importance of the Astana process on Syria and his country’s efforts for a peaceful settlement in that country, and underscored that success at both the Geneva and Astana platforms are critical and that they should be supported by the entire international community.

Also in his address, he noted that the UN system may be subject of criticism but at the same time it remains the “beacon of hope” for billions around the globe and a universal institution that brings with it the promise of better, safer and more sustainable future.

[\*Full statement available here\*](#)

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## **Addressing Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh proposes UN-monitored ‘safe zones’ in Myanmar**

21 September 2017 – Myanmar must stop “ethnic cleansing” in Rakhine state, and “safe zones” should be created inside that country to protect all civilians, under the supervision of the United Nations, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the General Assembly today.

“I have come here just after seeing the hungry, distressed and hopeless Rohingya from Myanmar who took shelter in Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh,” Ms. Hasina said during the annual general debate. “This forcibly displaced people of Myanmar are fleeing an ‘ethnic cleansing’ in their own country where they have been living for centuries.”

She noted that her country is currently sheltering over 800,000 forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar and that the ongoing atrocities and human rights violations in Myanmar’s Rakhine state once again aggravated the situation at the Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

She proposed that Myanmar unconditionally stop the practice of “ethnic cleansing” in Rakhine immediately and forever and the UN Secretary-General immediately send a fact-finding mission to Myanmar.

She also proposed that “safe zones” be created inside Myanmar to protect all civilians irrespective of religion and ethnicity under UN supervision and all forcibly displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh return to their homes in Myanmar in a sustainable manner.

As a major troop- and police-contributing country, Bangladesh underscores the importance of upholding effectiveness and credibility of UN peacekeeping operations, and maintains a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to any allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse, the Prime Minister said, adding that she endorsed the UN “voluntary compact” on this issue.

[Full statement available here](#)

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## **Climate change requires most urgent mitigation measures, African leaders tell UN Assembly**

21 September 2017 – Citing the spate of recent devastating hurricanes, African leaders – from small island States to larger landlocked countries – mounted the podium of the United Nations General Assembly today to call for urgent measures to mitigate the effects of climate change.

“We-urge the international community to not only respond generously to these countries’ calls for support, but to take far more seriously the need to upscale the urgent action required to prevent, prepare for, adapt to and recover from such increasingly destructive climate-related disasters,” Seychelles President Danny Faure said, citing recently afflicted countries.

“The thoughts of the Government and people of Seychelles go out to the millions of people in South Asia, Africa, the United States, and Mexico, and our island brothers and sisters in the Caribbean who have suffered unimaginable losses from floods, hurricanes and other forms of extreme weather these past months,” he told the Assembly’s 72nd general debate.

Mr. Faure called for an inclusive approach to stepping up implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#) on limiting global warming greenhouse emissions.

“According to the latest science, all stakeholders need to be involved if the international community is to drastically scale up our collective climate action to achieve our targets,” he said.

[Full statement available here](#)



Vice-President Mokgweetsi Eric Masisi of Botswana addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Vice-President Mokgweetsi Eric Masisi of Botswana appealed to the United States to re-consider its decision to withdraw from Paris accord. "As you would be aware, the challenge of climate change requires collective action, as no single country can successfully address this challenge on its own," he said.

"It is as if the recent hurricanes and their disastrous effects were to underscore to the American Administration that climate change is real," he added, stressing that the adverse impacts of climate change undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development.

[Full statement available here](#)



President Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

The leaders also addressed a host of world issues, from terrorism to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear programme, and from the need for expansion of the 15-member UN Security Council with permanent African representation to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) that seek to haul hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, hunger and social ills by 2030.

Sao Tome and Principe President Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho lamented that funding for measures mitigating climate change lacks the support of the international community.

"Cooperation agreements should be established with ambitious funding for climate issues, as well as ensuring effective and efficient transfer of technology by the more developed countries," he said.

"Combating the phenomenon of climate change is perhaps the most complex objective for which all humanity is called upon to intervene. The success of this fight is perhaps the greatest legacy we can leave to future generations."

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth of the Republic of Mauritius addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth said addressing climate change is critical to successfully implementing the [2030 Agenda](#) of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to eliminate a host of social ills, including hunger, poverty and lack of access to education and health care.

“With the increasing number and intensity of climate related disasters – storms, droughts, flash floods, to name but a few – it would be naive on our part to dismiss the climate change,” he said.

Mitigating the effects of climate change will require substantial effort and resources, especially for small island developing States. “While we welcome the generous pledges made so far, including the creation of the [Green Climate Fund](#), we need to streamline and simplify the procedures for these States to access these funds, especially in the light of the recent events.”

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Umaro Sissoco Embaló of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Guinea-Bissau Prime Minister Umaro Sissoco Embaló the threats of climate change were of “a planetary scale with prospects of frightening, and not unlikely, consequences.”

On the situation in his own country, which has had a troubled past, he said: “ We continue to experience a period of institutional challenges... These are challenges related to the functioning of some of our core political institutions, namely parliament and the government.

“But it is with profound gravity that I inform you that civilian peace reigns in my country. There are no reports of universal human rights violations that merit complaints or are worthy of concern.”

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Selom Komi Klassou of Togo addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Togo’s Prime Minister Selom Komi Klassou stressed the need to carry out the Paris accord as well as the [SDGs](#).

“The challenges facing our world have a real impact on development of Africa,” he said. “And one of the imperatives, in order to confront it effectively, remains the continent’s economic transformation.

“We realize this transformation depends, firstly on the responsibility of the



African elite, but international solidarity is also prerequisite,” he added. “Investment needs to be increased in the fields of science, industry, agribusiness and high technology.”

[\*Full statement available here\*](#)

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