

**Statement by His Excellency the Honourable Baron Waqa M.P.
President of the Republic of Nauru**

**United Nations World Humanitarian Summit
High-Level Leaders' Roundtable**

***“Natural disasters and climate change:
Managing risks & crises differently”***

Tuesday 24 May 2016, Istanbul, Turkey

Mr. Secretary General,

I would like to make four simple points to frame our discussions here today.

First, it is important to emphasize that there is nothing “natural” about our current situation. Greenhouse gas emissions over the past One Hundred and Fifty years have pushed the climate system beyond the boundaries of human experience. Climate change can no longer be divorced from what we used to consider “natural” disasters.

Second, the threat from climate change is now. We are already seeing dangerous impacts on our countries and communities, with the most vulnerable among us bearing the largest burden.

Third, the Paris Agreement notwithstanding, these climate impacts will continue to increase. We are operating in the context of a progressively worsening baseline, with the real possibility of abrupt changes in the near future.

And fourth, we must therefore develop a more sophisticated discourse that includes hard-nosed risk assessment. Even if changes in the global climate system are gradual, the reaction of our human systems may not be. Economic, transport, food and water distribution - these systems are complex, inter-related, and require a much better understanding of how they will function under climate stress.

For this reason, the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) have called for the appointment of a Special Representative on Climate & Security to help us manage climate risks differently. The responsibilities of the Special Representative would include:

- Improving our understanding of the security dimensions of climate change,
- Facilitating regional cooperation and resolution of cross-border issues affected by climate change,

- Monitoring dangerous tipping points at the climate and security nexus, and
- Engaging in preventive diplomacy as appropriate.

In this respect, the Special Representative would advance **Core Responsibility Four** and its associated Core Commitments.

The work of the Special Representative should inform the full and effective implementation of the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda, the Paris agreement, and the SAMOA Pathway, advancing **Core Commitment One**. All of these agreements must be implemented with consideration of the security implications of climate change.

Many countries need assistance understanding the full range of climate-related challenges that they face, so a Special Representative would empower national and local leadership and capacities, consistent with **Core Commitments Two and Three**.

Core Commitment Four is to increase investments in building community resilience, which we must ensure is targeted and does not become obsolete due to worsening climate conditions. This will require the involvement of marginalized groups and an understanding of their specific circumstances. The Special Representative is well equipped to perform this type of analysis.

Lastly, many climate-related security and humanitarian risks have regional and global implications, which is a perspective that can be offered by the Special Representative, consistent with **Core Commitment Five**.

We have failed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, despite Twenty years of discussions. Many impacts are now unavoidable, and climate change will be one of the most pressing humanitarian challenges of the next Twenty years – possibly much longer.

A new Special Representative on Climate and Security would be a lasting legacy of the World Humanitarian Summit and demonstrate to vulnerable countries and communities that we take seriously one of the greatest humanitarian threats of our generation.

Thank you.