



Republic of Nauru

Office of the President

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 1 on Political Leadership to Preventing and Ending Conflicts

Monday 23 May 2016, Istanbul, Turkey

Mr. Moderator,

During the opening Leaders' Segment, I spoke about the shortcomings in global environmental, economic, and security governance. The growing humanitarian challenges we face must be considered in this broader context.

The most vivid governance failure in this respect is in our efforts to address climate change, which has roots in both our environmental *and* our economic policy decisions. The Paris Agreement notwithstanding, we are now locked into a future that will bring some very dangerous climate impacts. No country will be immune, but some will be more vulnerable than others.

From the perspective of a small island nation in the Pacific, climate change is our humanitarian crisis. It is our war. The brewing super-cyclones can be as destructive as any conventional bombs. Sea level rise can occupy our territory as surely as any invading army. And climate change will be your humanitarian challenge as well.

In his landmark report on the security implications of climate change, the United Nations Secretary-General, called climate change a "threat multiplier." The stark reality is that we have fundamentally altered the Earth's physical and natural systems, and we have very little understanding of how our human systems will respond.

- Will we find a way to feed nine billion people when crop yields are expected to fall?
- Will we learn to share dwindling freshwater resources, even as our glaciers disappear?

- Will we be able to protect the millions who are rendered homeless when low-lying coastal areas are inundated?
- And can these and many other challenges be managed so that we avoid breakdowns in governance and a proliferation of failed states?

We are simply not prepared.

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

- Facilitating regional cooperation and resolution of cross-border issues that might be affected by climate change,
- Identifying and monitoring potentially dangerous tipping points at the climate and security nexus,
- Engaging in preventive diplomacy as appropriate, and
- Supporting post-conflict situations when climate change is a risk factor that could undermine stability.

This discussion is only in its infancy. I would like to highlight the leadership of Germany for bringing this issue to the Security Council in 2011. We should build on their work in a consistent and systematic manner.

We speak a lot about addressing the root causes of humanitarian crisis. The security implications of climate change is currently a very large blind spot for the international community. Therefore, I ask you to support our proposal for the appointment of a Special Representative.

Thank you.