to the

Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Sea-Level Rise and Its Impacts

Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

to be held in New York from 22 26 June 2020

1.0 Introduction

The present contribution is a collective efforts from the PaETOas region , including the PaETOas Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Secretariat of the PaETOas Community (SPC), the Secretariat of the PaETOas Regional Environment PrograEmme (SPREP) aEnd the Offase of the Pa-5(c)4(yas)3( )-89(O)-7(

members. PIF members also take riously custodians and sponsibility red stewaErdship of the OceaEn, a from many centuries of connection and liaEnce on the OceaEn.

While a -level aEnd pa-5(c)4(ts)-122(of)-6( )-119Eclimate haEnge itime z-5(oneEs)-120Emay aEffect mar States globally, the PaETOas is paErtasularly affecte The PaETOas is home to the majority of the -lying atoll States and States dependent on coral islands and cays. Sea-level rise threatens to devaEstate PIF members given the extent of their coaEstlines, their extensive use of low-lying features to geneErate maritime z4(oneEs,)-110(a-5(nd)-109Etheir)3(t)-109Eeconomic liaEnce members have consistently made clear, aJTJETQ0.00000912 0 612 792 reW*nBT/F4 12 Tf1 0 0 1 307.85 17

chaEnge aEre phenomena that small island States have doneE the leaEst to cause.

This submission

The mean area of an island is 90 km2 and over 50% of the population live within 1 km of the coast (excluding Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea).

The Pacific has some 3500 km2 of mangroves that are essential for food security, coastal protection and carbon capture.

The main sectors of the member States are maritime transports, fisheries (coastal fisheries for food security, offshore fisheries for sustainable development), tourism, and agriculture (agricultural land within 1 km of the coast). The cultural and creative industries are rapidly expanding sectors in the islands, with a growth rate of up to 7%.

About 53% of the global tuna catches come from the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

75% of our coastal communities earn their first income and 50% their second income from the fishery industry.

Not only Pacific islands are extremely vulnerable to climate change, the Pacific Ocean is also a major driver of the global climate.

3.0 Key Policy Decisions and Frameworks

Forum Leaders Communique 2019

Para 25: PIF Leaders discussed progress made by members to conclude negotiations on maritime boundary claims since the Leaders meeting in Nauru 2018, and encouraged members to conclude all outstanding maritime boundaries claims and zones. Additionally, Leaders reaffirmed the importance of preserving m
maritime zones, in the face of sea-level rise, noting the existing and ongoing regional mechanisms to support maritime boundaries delimitation.

Para 26: PIF Leaders committed to a collective effort, including to develop international law, with the aim of ensuring that once a Forum m
accordance with the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, that the members maritime zones could not be challenged or reduced as a result of sea-level rise and climate change.

Para 1: We, the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, meeting in Tuvalu see first-hand the impacts and implications of the climate change crisis facing our Pacific Island Nations.

Para 2: Right now, climate change and disasters are impacting all our countries. Our seas are rising, oceans are warming, and extreme events such as cyclones and typhoons, flooding, drought and king tides are frequently more intense, inflicting damage and destruction to our communities and ecosystems and putting the health of our peoples at risk. All around the world, people affected by disaster and climate change-induced displacement are losing their homes and livelihoods, particularly the most vulnerable atoll nations.

Para 11: As Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, we recognise that to lead is to act and acknowledge the action being taken by all our Members, but we know more needs to be done. To secure the future of our Blue Pacific, we have pursued and must continue to pursue, bold and

ii. High confidence for wave heights to increase in the tropical Eastern Pacific if emissions remain at current levels (RCP 8.5) observed sea-level rise in this region is also higher than global averages.

iii. Extreme sea-level events such as surges from cyclones will increase with sea-level rise and marine heat waves (10-fold increase) cyclone season also coincides with the king tides season.

iv. Even under low emissions scenarios, atoll nations will face moderate to high risks. Many coastal regions will face adaptation limits. Without adaptation, sea-level rise associated with a 2-degree warmer world could displaced 280 million people by 2100 globally, which included up to 50% of the population in Pacific Island countries and territories. A 1.5-degree warmer world would have a significant decrease in that number of displaced people.

Causes of sea-level rise: adverse impacts caused by climate change, such as warming causing expansion of the water column and increase in sea level due to melting of ice caps, ocean acidification and impact on coral reefs, human coastal developments that contribute to accelerating erosion and increasing the vulnerability of coasts.

Current and future effects: Some figures on the projection of sea-level rise in the region can be found at https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/countries.

Current/future impacts and responses: Impacts related to salinization of fresh water supplies territories

Climate change impacts are not limited to sea-level rise but include a complex interplay of factors, which include increasing ocean acidification, rising sea surface temperature, higher intensity of tropical cyclones, and deoxygenation. These factors and compounding impacts will have a severe impact on tropical coral reefs in the Pacific.

i. The tropical Pacific region holds approximately 25% (about 66,000 km^2) of the global coral reef area and these coral reefs provide shoreline protection, food, and income for around 50% of the population in the Pacific.

ii.

to the realization of a just and eq The United Nations General Assembly

In turn, PIF members have planned their national and regional development in reliance on the legal order under UNCLOS, including the sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction generated by its regime of maritime zones.

PIF members have invested significant resources to pursue best practices for determining their national baselines and establishing outer limits of maritime zones in accordance with UNCLOS. PIF members have concluded maritime boundary treaties and, in accordance with UNCLOS, have defined the outer limits of their maritime zones, including continental shelves beyond 200 nautical miles. PIF members have also established regional agreements, including on the

6.0 Existing Projects on Sea-Level Rise in the Pacific

Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific (COSPPac)

The Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific (COSPPac) operates and maintains 14 tide gauges in 13 Pacific island countries.[7] The projects work with partner organisations

In addition to its system of tide gauge facilities, the Pacific Sea Level and Geodetic Monitoring network also includes a network of earth monitoring stations for geodetic observations, implemented and maintained by Geoscience Australia. The earth monitoring installations provide Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) measurements to allow absolute determination of the vertical height of the tide gauges that measure sea level.

Resilient Boundaries for a Blue Pacific

The Resilient Boundaries for a Blue Pacific project is designed to support the implementation of the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape, particularly priority one, and is also aligned with the Forum Leaders Communique of 2019 mentioned above. The project covers fourteen Pacific Island Countries, namely Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The project seeks to mainstream considerations for climate change into

technical, legal and policy decision to strengthen their resilience.

Australia-funded ICT for Spatial Information

-lying countries. However, most climate adaptation activities in the Pacific are not informed by the fundamental data required to identify the magnitude of, and communities at risk from, coastal flooding. Adaptation to future sea-level rise to build resilience in communities requires a sound understanding of the potential impacts and risks associated with coastal inundation and erosion.

land area and roads affected by different climate change inundation scenarios. Thereby, putting this information and analysis directly in the hands of the decision maker for adaptation outcomes.

Pacific Marine Climate Change Report Card 2018 (Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme, SPREP and SP1 0 Uua

The report card provides an easy-to-read, scientifically robust summary of what we know about marine and coastal climate change impacts in the Pacific, and explores some of the actions that are needed to respond to these impacts. It can be used as evidence to support policy, programme and project development and is relevant to the following key initiatives:

Sustainable Development Goals SDG) for Oceans SDG14 Life under Water) and Climate C

neutral decision-making; and fixing geographical coordinates of maritime baselines and outer limits of maritime zones.

PIF members consider that there are good grounds to work towards ensuring that, once maritime zones are delineated in accordance with UNCLOS, those maritime zones should not be challenged or reduced as a result of sea-level rise and climate change.