

Talofa Madam Chair;

The impact of climate change and rising sea level for Tuvalu and other low-lying atolls is a matter of life and death. The continuing denial and inaction of industrialized countries by disregarding the IPCC Special report on 1.5, which spells our demise and deny our rights to remain on our beautiful and peaceful islands is of great disappoint for us. Our indigenous culture, wisdom and knowledge systems are rooted in our land, our ocean, and seabed. These systems define who we are as 'peoples.' Such relationship is clearly reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. If the nexus is broken, literally it is equal to death. That is why migration was never and will never be our priority – but rather, a matter of choice.

Madam Chair, the frequent visit of cyclones, droughts, king tides and other environmental catastrophes left our people in constant fear. We hold the strong conviction that we cannot speak about human rights and turn a blind eye to climate change. It is our rights to land, to self-determination, sovereignty and most importantly to life that are likely impacted by these events.

Madam Chair, is there anyone in this room ready to watch a country submerge for the fault of others. I am certain that no one in this room is ready to see our submergence become a reality.

I therefore would like to propose the following recommendations for the EMPRIP:

Firstly, EMRIP to request UNHCR and IOM to focus on the vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific region, giving priority to the retention of the rights of Indigenous Peoples when forced to migrate due to the effects of climate change;

Secondly, EMRIP to request the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to include the respect for human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples as a principle in the development of the new treaty protecting biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ);

Lastly, EMRIP to support the protection of indigenous peoples' natural resources management and traditional livelihoods, through emphasizing the link between human rights and climate change in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Lastly, allow me to say thank you to the UN voluntary fund for making my participation possible.

Fakaftai lasi