

# Pacific Caucus Intervention Text

Aotearoa

Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Geneva  
Item 7(c) [Disappearing States]

Read by:

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Wednesday 20 July 2005

The Pacific Caucus is

1. Māori are concerned about indigenous peoples' traditional lands and territories that are continuing to be threatened by rising oceans. For many Pacific island indigenous peoples, relocation is now an unavoidable outcome, while others live under a cloud of uncertainty – with all the human rights and environmental issues that this problem entails.
2. We call on the United Nations bodies and states to continue to identify the specific causes of rising oceans and to develop concrete strategies to halt and reverse this trend. However, greater participation of indigenous peoples is required in the process of finding holistic, multi-faceted solutions. The Kyoto Protocol and other initiatives are a commendable start, but it will take a greater commitment, paradigm shift and attitudinal change on the part of all states, industries and consumers of goods and services.
3. We understand that the New Zealand government has offered assistance in terms of relocating indigenous peoples to Aotearoa, and we support this generous move. However, we would like to see that any relocation is undertaken with sufficient participation and meaningful, informed involvement of the affected indigenous peoples – not just solutions being imposed on them. Such people in effect become refugees, and their particular vulnerabilities call on host states to give extra consideration to their situation so as to avoid a second wave of harm resulting post-relocation.
4. On the assumptions that (1) the wealthiest and most developed states are those who have disproportionately contributed the most to global warming, and (2) global warming is the leading cause of rising oceans, we therefore expect that these countries will contribute a corresponding share of resources and commitment to respond to the associated environmental and humanitarian issues and response strategies. (Being a coastal nation, Māori are also prone to losing significant traditional territories either directly through rising oceans and increased erosion activity, or by the 'creep' of coastal lands into Crown ownership due to the legislative definition of "foreshore".<sup>1</sup>

ENDS (321 Words)

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<sup>1</sup> Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 refers. This Act transferred ownership of Māori customary foreshore and seabed lands to the Crown against unprecedented Māori (and civil society) opposition.