

**Statement - Side Event: Climate, Peace and Stability: Weathering
Risk Through COP and Beyond**

**Statement by Hon. Rennier Gadabu
Minister for Climate Change of Nauru**

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon.

Allow me to begin by thanking Germany for the invitation for Nauru to co-host this important event, and for their sterling leadership on this very important issue of climate change and security. I would also like to recognize Adelphi and the MSC for their work in organising this event.

Due to the current reality we live in, logistics difficulties prevented me from being physically present in Glasgow for the Climate Conference this year, so unfortunately, I am not able to join you at this event in person. Nevertheless, I am pleased to have my Government co-host and be a part of the conversation.

A little over ten years ago, the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum agreed that addressing the security implications of climate change was a top concern and should be pursued in all relevant international fora. Even then, the writing was on the wall. Previous multilateral efforts had failed to mobilize climate action at the necessary scale, and some dangerous impacts were probably inevitable. For some of our members, climate change presented an existential threat.

A lot has happened since then, and the tenor of the debate has shifted significantly. Now Secretary-General Guterres rightly points out: Climate change is one of *the* defining security issues of our time. After decades of inaction and delay, many dangerous impacts are now unavoidable. In Small Island Developing States, like Nauru, and other

climate-vulnerable regions of the world, many of these effects have already arrived: More intense and more frequent extreme weather events, sea level rise, droughts and ocean acidification and salinization, are, around the world, already contributing to greater food and water insecurity, economic volatility, societal stress, human displacement and migration. This is especially evident in vulnerable countries and regions, particularly those that are often least responsible for climate change, but no country is immune: developed countries have suffered unprecedented floods, heat waves, drought, desertification and fires in recent months, and will continue to do so.

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We are up against a progressively worsening baseline. Extreme events will continue to occur at a frequency and magnitude well outside human experience. *It will get worse*, and therefore, past experience is a poor guide for dealing with future impacts.

The title page of *The Economist* in July this year read “No safe place”, referring to a world shaped by the devastating impact of climate change. We have a narrow window of opportunity to prevent the worst impacts but we must significantly strengthen our efforts to address the root causes. It is critical we all raise our ambition to limit global warming to 1.5°C, scale up adaptation action and climate finance and make sure that COP26 here in Glasgow is the success it needs to be to avoid a future where there is truly “no safe place”. The IPCC has recently made it crystal clear: if the international community fails to make rapid and immediate cuts to greenhouse gas emissions, there is a greater than 90% chance that global warming will surpass 1.5 °C within the next two decades, and further changes in temperature will only increase the likelihood of extreme events, such as heavy rainfall, droughts and wildfires.

Limiting global warming is crucial but it is only part of the challenge before us. The climate is already changing and we can no longer

completely prevent all of the negative effects of climate change from occurring, but we *can*, and indeed, we *must*, do more to prevent the unavoidable effects of climate change from contributing to the destabilization of countries and entire regions, which risks leading to new armed conflicts or worsening existing conflicts.

A *laissez faire* (***pronounced le'say fair***) approach will not be enough to address the security implications of climate change. Building climate-resilient systems that support peace and stability urgently require a much more concerted international effort. And this is precisely why Nauru has partnered with Germany to co-chair the Group of Friends on Climate and Security at the UN – to support such efforts.

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The entire UN system must address this challenge, in all relevant fora and within all relevant mandates. Nauru has proposed six specific functions how the UN can improve cooperation in this area:

1. Integrated country and regional risk assessments;
2. Preventative diplomacy in situations where climate instability is provoking conflict, such as migration or competition over diminishing natural resources;
3. Facilitation of cross-border and regional cooperation around shared vulnerabilities, such as food or water security;
4. Monitoring of tipping points at the climate and security nexus, such as the collapse of ecosystems critical to human settlements;
5. Targeted support in post-conflict situations where vulnerabilities to climate change could escalate tensions; and finally
6. Thematic work on essential human systems vulnerable to climate change, such as food production and distribution, fresh water access, internal and cross-border migration, land use and

tenure, disaster response and displacement, industrial production and distribution, and international finance.

Climate change is a threat to international peace and security. No nation can face it alone. We will only succeed in protecting the security of vulnerable countries and communities if our political system shows the courage to make the fundamental changes that the climate crisis requires.

Thank you.