

## **UN General Assembly passes resolution that links climate change to security**

UN/PACNEWS  
Fri, 19 Jun 2009

NEW YORK, USA --- The United Nations General Assembly has unanimously passed a resolution urging the relevant organs of the UN to intensify their efforts to address the security implications of climate change. The passage of the resolution marks the culmination of a year-long campaign by a coalition of Pacific small island developing states (PSIDS) to focus the attention of the international community on the security aspects of climate change including matters of international peace and security which fall under the mandate of the Security Council. Small island states are particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, which scientists project could increase by a meter or more before the end of this century. For low-lying countries like Tuvalu, which is no more than three meters above sea level on average, just a small rise could be catastrophic and force the evacuation of its nine constituent islands.

Even those islands blessed with higher land may be stretched to the breaking point by salt-water intrusion into farmland, water scarcity and conflicts over resources. Island countries are facing the very real possibility that their culture and ancestral lands may be destroyed. In order to avoid the worst consequences of climate change and decrease the risk of this humanitarian disaster from occurring throughout the Pacific and elsewhere, the international community must take action to rapidly reduce global carbon emissions.

The resolution comes on the heels of the Niue Declaration on Climate Change, which was signed by members of the Pacific Island Forum in August 2008 and which committed signatories to “advocate and support the recognition, in all international fora, of the urgent social, economic and security threats caused by the adverse impacts of climate change and sea-level rise” to small island communities. Past international agreements, such as the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Declaration, and the Mauritius Strategy have highlighted the special development challenges that climate change poses for small island developing states.

The resolution passed today is unique in that it is one of the first instruments to explicitly draw the connection between climate change and security. Frustrated with the lack of urgency to tackle climate change exhibited by much of the world, the PSIDS first proposed a General Assembly resolution urging the United Nations Security Council to examine the security implications posed by climate change back in March of 2008. In addition to its call for action, the resolution ‘Climate Change and its possible security implications’ requests United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to prepare a comprehensive report on the security dimensions of climate change in collaboration with regional and international organisations and U.N. member states.

Members of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) with presence at the United Nations are namely; Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.