



**Statement for His Excellency Lionel Rouwen Aingimea M.P.,**

**President of the Republic of Nauru**

**United Nations General Assembly 77<sup>th</sup> Session**

to be delivered by Ms. Josie-Ann Dongobir, Chargé d’Affaires

Mr. President,

It is an honour to represent His Excellency Lionel Rouwen Aingimea and deliver this statement for the Republic of Nauru at the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

On behalf of the government and people of the Republic of Nauru, allow me to congratulate Your Excellency, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi on your assumption of the Presidency of the General Assembly for the 77<sup>th</sup> session. Let me assure you of my delegation’s full cooperation and support as you lead this august body in seeking transformative solutions to our shared interlocking challenges.

Allow me to also thank His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives, for his exceptional stewardship of this august body during the 76th session, and note the many successful initiatives undertaken during his tenure, including the Presidency of Hope Fellowship. Nauru was privileged to have one of its young officials participate in this pioneering Fellowship.

Mr. President,

We come together at a critical moment created by three interconnected crises: the COVID pandemic and its consequences, the war in Ukraine, and a tipping point in climate change. These crises are creating unprecedented humanitarian challenges, as well as growing concerns about the global economy. To overcome these challenges, and to fulfill the promises of the 2030 Agenda, we must draw upon the strength of multilateralism and the ability of this organization to bring about transformative change that builds our people’s resilience to face the crises of today and of the future.

This time last year, Nauru was proud to declare its COVID free status. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. Thankfully however, with the strong support of our partners, Nauru was able to achieve high vaccination rates for both adults and children. Our high vaccination rates have been critical in ensuring minimal casualties from the COVID infection. We thank our partners Australia,

India, Japan, Switzerland, and the United States including the COVAX Facility for their support throughout the pandemic.

We would also like to acknowledge in particular the support and good practices demonstrated by the people of Taiwan in the face of COVID. The Republic of China (Taiwan) is an important partner in the global response to the pandemic, as well as a particular partner of Nauru. Taiwan's exemplary response and assistance should not be ignored. Taiwan is ready to share their experience and we call for their recognition to ensure their right to engage with us all in this global forum.

With the help of our partners and friends, the health effects of COVID on our country have been relatively mild. Despite this achievement, we note with deep concern the growing global resistance to vaccinations, alongside a rise in misinformation and fear mongering through both social and mainstream media platforms. Vaccine resistance and misinformation puts us all at risk not only for COVID but for other diseases, as evidenced through global outbreaks of measles and polio. In our interconnected world, we know that no one, and no country, is safe until everyone is safe. We need practical and collaborative solutions to combat the dangerous trend of misinformation for the sake of global health. As we have seen too many times in Nauru, in our deeply connected world, an outbreak in one corner can produce a ripple of destruction that can touch us all.

Mr. President,

To build our resilience domestically, Nauru prioritizes a preventative strategy for public health. Our strategy is informed by the lessons learned during this pandemic and we continue to seek support to review, overhaul and revamp our health systems, and to thereby develop innovative solutions to our needs. Moreover, to address the challenges of today and tomorrow, our health system needs to be climate resilient, with the capacity for viral risk management through e-medicine, digital technology, and more. Meeting our ambition will require partners to provide support and technical expertise.

Beyond communicable diseases, other health challenges plague small island developing states thus undermining our chances of a sustainable and healthy future where no one is left behind. The battle against non-communicable diseases is one battle we have little odds of winning due to ongoing challenges with food security and nutrition, as well as weak policies, strategies, and capacities to adequately address substance use and abuse. There must be wholesale transformation of the food system to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition. Incremental measures such as trainings, workshops and kitchen gardens alone cannot meet the needs. We call on the UN and our partners to focus their efforts and help us towards securing affordable nutritious food for all.

Mr. President,

We also take this opportunity to thank the Government of Cuba for their longstanding commitment to strengthening our health sector through the work of their medical brigades. Despite the assistance they provide to many, the Cuban people continue to suffer from the economic, commercial, and financial embargo of the United States. We call on the United States to not forget the friendly people of Cuba who are also struggling like us under this pandemic.

Mr. President,

Education holds the key to unlocking the transformative solutions we so urgently need to address the interlocking challenges of today's world. Education holds the mold for shaping the future we want and need. We must leave this week and the Transforming Education Summit not only inspired and energized by the passion of young people, but with concrete ideas and partnerships to take home and implement.

Quality education for all will require both creativity and urgent action, to tackle immediate needs and build towards long-term transformation. We have the opportunity now to reimagine education and invest in new approaches.

We join calls for global efforts to review and revamp our education delivery models – with a view to improving teacher attraction and retention strategies, strengthening partnerships between the homes and the school as well as the development of inexpensive, alternate models of delivery.

Mr. President,

When we speak of transformation and resilience, we must prioritize the Climate emergency, where the Pacific is on the front lines.

Climate change continues to ravage our planet, and the global community has once again failed to take the actions required to curb its spread. We can no longer continue to debate the human impact on our planet and when and if we will band together to mount a fight against the climate emergency and its undeniable security implications.

The maintenance of international peace and security demands that we unite with a shared understanding of the threats and challenges we face.

Nauru continues its call upon the Secretary General to appoint a *Special Representative on Climate and Security*, and to immediately undertake an assessment of the UN's capacity to respond to climate disasters.

Climate change has infiltrated every aspect of our lives and as such our response must be equally diverse and robust.

While we are hopeful for COP27, we are not naïve to the reality that work in this arena is far from the urgency and scale required. Major emitters are lacking in both commitment and action to reduce emissions. We need stronger commitments and actions which move past pretty words on paper.

Nauru, like other island nations have lived with the realities of climate change for some time now. Climate change undermines and threatens the ability of Governments and institutions to deliver basic services in the short and long-term. The Higher Ground Initiative (HGI) is crucial to our ability to reclaim land that is now unusable. Land that presents us both with an urgent need and an expensive financing venture, hence we seek both financial and technical assistance for the completion and implementation of the Masterplan for a pilot plot. If successful, this pilot plot can transform the future of Nauru, ensuring that our homeland can continue for generations to come.

There also remains a serious and pressing need for climate resilient infrastructure.

Nauru faces significant delays in its port redevelopment project. A project that represents both a crucial domestic need and an international example of climate resilient infrastructure. However, consequent of the pandemic, Nauru now faces unprecedented delays and unforeseen added costs beyond its national capacities.

We join other vulnerable nations in the call for practical financial solutions to these unforeseen challenges to key adaptation measures.

Mr. President,

Global transformation demands a global energy transition. And we welcome the ongoing work from the High-Level Dialogue on Energy and work being undertaken to meet SDG7.

A just and inclusive energy transition requires that no one, and no country, is left behind, and reaching these goals will require international financial and technical support. Moreover, it will require that we rethink how we get energy. And where that energy comes from.

We cannot expect the trajectory of global emissions to drop without access to viable energy alternatives. Deep sea minerals provide us with a solution. Polymetallic nodules will transform big and small countries' energy systems with an accessible alternative and a pathway to a just energy transition.

This is a priority for Nauru at the International Seabed Authority, and we continue to call for more support and investment to ensure the establishment and adherence to robust governance mechanisms in this field. We must not lose focus towards our shared goals of a just and inclusive energy transition as we work to complete the two-year timeline to establish the global regulatory framework for deep seabed minerals.

Mr. President,

Nauru is a big ocean state. We are people of the ocean, and our lives are inextricably linked to the Pacific Ocean. The ocean has shaped who we are as it has similarly shaped the nations and peoples of other small island developing states. But we must transform our relationship with the ocean if it is to continue to sustain us and future generations.

We express our disappointment that the work of the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction was not completed.

We are committed to overcoming issues of divergence in these negotiations. Issues that are very important to island nations like the special circumstances and shared vulnerabilities of small island developing states must be recognized – this is not new.

We must also come to consensus on benefit sharing on the high seas, especially as it relates to marine genetic resources. This is crucial for the economic diversity of island nations and is an integral part of the blue economy.

Finally, we raise as we have before, the critical importance of ensuring sustainable fisheries. This includes ensuring that overfishing is not taking place, that fair prices are paid to small islands for fish taken from our water, and that we eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

Mr. President,

Nauru remains committed to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement. These historic agreements outline our shared optimism for the future, and they provide us with the means and metrics to reach our ambition.

However, they are in danger of not being worth the paper they are printed on without adequate and predictable support from the international community as Nauru and many island nations will not be able to realize the Sustainable Development Goals, nor to adapt, and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change.

The ability to access sustainable financing, determines whether we succeed or fail. Nauru, like many SIDS face barriers to sustained economic growth due to our geographic remoteness, small scale of our economy, vulnerabilities to climate change, external economic and financial shocks and the rules that govern development assistance.

For years small island developing states have reiterated the limitations of the per capita income as a measure of development. This arbitrary measure does not adequately consider our special circumstances and unique vulnerabilities.

Nauru stresses the importance of the on-going work on the Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index and reiterate the importance of its establishment. Though the process of finalizing and adopting the MVI has moved at a slower rate than anticipated or desired, we nonetheless thank and commend the High-Level Panel for their ongoing work thus far. Undoubtedly, crucial work such as the MVI cannot be hurried.

In this light, Nauru calls for Member States to universally agree and adopt the MVI once finalized, thus contributing to making sure that the needs of the most vulnerable are tailored to as required.

Mr. President,

As we commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Nauru as a state party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, encourages those member states who have yet to ratify the TPNW to do so, so we are united in the global goal for a peaceful and just world free of nuclear weapons.

We are facing a time of great risk and uncertainty. This can, however, also be a time of opportunity and transformation.

To ensure the “No one is Left Behind”, our joint post-pandemic recovery efforts must be embedded and upheld in institutions and practices of good governance. We must be careful to not compromise on good governance practices under pressures to build back faster and better.

We reiterate our commitment to the principles of good governance as we undertake our national general elections, and we call on Member States to observe and actively strengthen and promote good governance both domestically and internationally.

Mr. President,

In concluding, allow me to express our hope that this year allows us to be open to the transformation we seek. As Scripture guides us, in Romans 12:2, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

May God bless the Republic of Nauru and May God bless the United Nations.

I thank you (Mwa tubwa kor).