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**Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs,
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[Check Against Delivery]

FIJI'S NATIONAL STATEMENT
78th UNGA

Friday 22nd September 2023

3. We are now living in an **unpredictable world**. We must **act** to survive these “**interesting times**.”
4. Our collective effort is necessary to address enormous challenges and reduce the risk associated with the unpredictable environment that we face today, not only as sovereign nations, but as the whole of humanity.
5. Instead of leveraging global cooperation to manage our shared challenges and associated risk, growing geopolitical rivalry is escalating these tensions.
6. Our Blue Pacific is at the center of geopolitical tensions.
7. At the end of World War II, peace finally returned to the Pacific but today, we are facing **renewed geopolitical competition with a similar but complex build-up**.

12. In addition, small Island developing states are struggling to respond to **global supply shocks**, with soaring debt levels impacting progress in the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

13. **The inequality gap continues to widen.**

Mr. President, Excellencies

14. This year marks the **mid-point review** of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Earlier this week the outcome of the SDG Summit issued a “**call to action.**”

15. That was a **rallying call.**

16. The targets of the SDGs are now **in peril.**

This demands **bold, ambitious and accelerated actions.**

20. This underscores the need to **forge stronger and robust partnerships** to respond to the **‘Call to Action.’**

Mr. President, Excellencies

21. The COVID-19 pandemic **conflated** the impacts of recent natural disasters, and **worsened the burden** on all sectors of the Fijian economy.
22. We experienced a **significant economic downturn** as tourism, the **backbone** of our economy, came to a virtual **standstill**.
23. **Our economy is now on the recovery path led by the tourism sector which has rebounded to pre-pandemic levels.**

29. We are **committed** to the Secretary-General's '**New Agenda for Peace**' which outlines a **vision** for **multilateral efforts** based on **international law**, for a **world in transition**.

30. This new **agenda for peace**, echoes and is consistent with the **Boe Declaration on Regional Security** issued by Pacific Forum leaders which **declared the Pacific** to be a **region of peace**.

31. This concept of peace is the **premise for our future**.

32. I believe it is time that **we must consider the Pacific** as a **Zone of Peace**.

33. We have had discussions on the concept at the regional level and I am convinced that this will be the **Blue Pacific's contribution** to world order - the **zone of peace**.

We are committed to our **obligation** to **implement** human rights **covenants and conventions** emanating from the **Universal Declaration**.

37. I am also pleased to confirm that the Government I lead is committed to implementing the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)** and **ILO Convention 169 on the Rights of Tribal and Indigenous People**.

38. We **join** the international community to **affirm the implementation** of indigenous peoples' rights and aspirations.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

39. The **Climate Ambition Summit** earlier this week, called for **enhanced commitment** for climate action.

44. Fiji welcomes the **announcement** by President Biden earlier this week for his commitment to contribute **\$11billion** a year to **international climate finance** to help **lower-income** countries **implement their climate goals**.
45. I also commend U.S. leadership in the **reform of the World Bank** which is geared towards helping low and middle-income countries to **access finance**.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

46. Whilst the **mid-term review** of the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 2015–2030**, recognized some progress in implementation, there is room for **improvement** in the **pace of implementation**.