



GOVERNMENT OF TUVALU

NATIONAL STATEMENT

Delivered by

The Prime Minister of Tuvalu

Honourable Feleti Penitala Teo, **MP OBE**

at

The 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

General Debate

[On the 26 September 2025, in New York, USA]

THEME: Better Together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights

Madam President.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegations,

1. I am indeed honoured to once again address this august assembly as the Prime Minister of Tuvalu.
2. I convey to the General Assembly the warmest greetings and best wishes of the people and the Government of Tuvalu.
3. Allow me to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Your Excellency President Annalena Baerbock, on your election as President of the 80th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.
4. I assure you of my country Tuvalu's full support for your presidency.
5. Allow me also to express my sincere gratitude to the outgoing President H.E. Philemon Yang for his exemplary leadership over the past year.

80 Years Anniversary

6. **Madam President.**
7. Let me also express Tuvalu's heartfelt congratulations to the entire United Nations family for this historic milestone of 80 years of existence.
8. For eight decades, the United Nations stood as a steadfast pillar of peace, a champion of multilateralism, and a beacon of hope for humanity.
9. The UN's enduring presence is a testament of the transformative power of unity and the remarkable achievements made possible when nations join forces in a spirit of cooperation and unity of purpose.
10. Tuvalu takes enormous pride in its membership of the United Nations, especially as it celebrates its 25th anniversary of UN membership this month.

Madam President.

11. The occasion of the 80th anniversary of the UN should and must be a moment of reflection and re-envisioning to ensure the UN remains true and faithful to the objectives of its foundational document, the UN Charter.
12. Despite our historic achievements, we continue to witness conflicts, persistent human right violations and development setbacks.
13. These challenges run counter to the principles of the UN Charter and serve as a stark reminder that our quest for peace, justice and sustainable development remain incomplete despite the maturity and the advance age of the United Nations.
14. That is why Tuvalu fully supports the Secretary General's UN80 Initiative, to make the UN more effective and impactful for the millions of lives that depend on it.

UNGA80 Theme**Madam President.**

15. I commend and applaud the selection of the theme **“Better Together: 80 Years and More for Peace, Development and Human Rights”**.
16. The theme is both timely and fitting, considering the persistent challenges to global peace and security and to multilateralism.
17. The notion of ‘Better Together’ underscore the power of unity and working together despite differences amongst nations, because true progress can only be realised when the limiting factors to our common objectives and goals are adequately addressed.
18. The achievement of peace, security and sustainable development will hold little value if the poor and the most vulnerable are left behind.

19. I, therefore, commend your pragmatic vision in guiding the direction of this important and milestone session.

Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

20. **Madam President**
21. Climate change and sea level rise remain the greatest security threats to Tuvalu, and they continue to be the top development and security priorities for Tuvalu.
22. Climate change and sea level rise are multidimensional and cross cutting development issues that impact and challenge not only the future statehood and sovereignty of Tuvalu, but also the fundamental and integral quality of life of the people of Tuvalu in terms of food and water security, land security and economic security and prosperity.
23. Tuvalu continues its strong international advocacy for the special case of Tuvalu as the most vulnerable of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change, especially climate-induced sea level rise.
24. Towards that objective, Tuvalu has been vocal and active in its efforts to future proof its statehood and sovereignty by seeking to influence state practices and international law as they relate to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise on statehood continuity and the permanency of properly demarcated maritime boundaries and the right to the resources therein, pursuant to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.
25. Tuvalu has also taken bold and unilateral actions in this regard.
26. Tuvalu has amended its Constitution to ensure Tuvalu's statehood in perpetuity, and its maritime boundaries are protected and remain permanent, no matter what happens to Tuvalu's land territory because of climate change.

27. Through the landmark Falepili Union Treaty between Tuvalu and Australia, Australia is committed legally to recognize Tuvalu's sovereignty in perpetuity and supports human mobility with dignity and rights.
28. Tuvalu fully supports the efforts of the UN General Assembly in elevating the issue of sea level rise as a stand-alone issue and commends its historical high-level meeting last year in 2024 on sea level rise.
29. Tuvalu welcomes the decision of the UNGA to convene another high-level meeting on sea level rise next year at its 81st session in September 2026 with the view to consider a UN Declaration on Sea Level Rise.
30. The journey towards the UN Summit on Sea-Level Rise next year must be a turning point, securing long-term commitments so that island nations like mine are not left to confront the prospect of irreversible loss and damage.
31. For the anticipated UN Declaration on Sea Level Rise, Tuvalu strongly advocates the inclusion in the declaration of the following matters:
 - a. Affirm statehood continuity and the permanency of maritime boundaries amidst the climate crisis as a principle of international cooperation.
 - b. Promote secure, organised and dignified pathways for human mobility.
 - c. Support the safeguard of culture and heritage of affected communities.
 - d. Deliver innovative and rapid financing to enable adaptation journeys of the most vulnerable.
 - e. Ensure access to knowledge, data, and science to inform strategic planning, enhance resilience, and foster global cooperation.
32. Tuvalu welcomes the recent advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea Convention (ITLOS) regarding the obligations of states in relation to climate change.

33. The ITLOS issued on 21 May 2024 the first ever advisory opinion on climate change that spelt out for the first time the far-reaching obligations of major polluters to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions to prevent catastrophic harm and to pay loss and damages for breach of such obligations.
34. The ICJ's landmark Advisory Opinion delivered in July this year validates that climate change is an urgent and existential threat to human life and natural ecosystems.
35. The ICJ like the ITLOS, opined that states have a duty to prevent significant harm to the environment and therefore they must act with due diligence and use all means at their disposal to prevent activities carried out in their jurisdictions or under their control from causing significant harm to the climate system.
36. The advisory opinions also affirmed the principles of statehood continuity and the permanency of duly demarcated maritime boundaries despite the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.
37. The advisory opinions are significant milestones as they shift the conversation from political commitments to legally binding obligations.
38. Despite the advancement in state practices and the recent judicial pronouncements on climate and sea level rise, Tuvalu continues to call for the development of an international Treaty on sea-level rise that codifies the legal rights of affected states and peoples, and to reaffirm the principles of statehood continuity and the permanency of maritime boundaries.

39. It is my hope that the urgency to address the existential threat of climate change and sea level rise would not be overshadowed by the ongoing geopolitical competition between the superpowers and the military conflicts around the globe.
40. **Madam President.**
41. Whilst the UNGA prepares for the UN Summit on Sea-Level Rise next year, Tuvalu continues to fulfil its obligations under the UNFCCC.
42. With a sense of pride, Tuvalu has presented its first Biennial Transparency Report to the UNFCCC which is a testament to Tuvalu's commitment to transparency, accountability and to climate actions.
43. During this week, I announced the third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) which is Tuvalu's blueprint for resilience and a pledge to the world, linking climate action, sustainable development, cultural preservation, and a just transition to 100% renewable energy.
44. But the fight for 1.5 degree centigrade cannot be won with carbon dioxide reductions alone.
45. We must tackle methane and other short-lived gases that prevent near-term warming to buy time for deeper decarbonization to take root.
46. Only then, can we protect the world from irreversible tipping points like the rapidly expanding coral bleaching that is devastating our oceans.
47. Tuvalu has also updated its National Adaptation Plan which provides a strategic and inclusive framework to protect people, ecosystems, infrastructure, and cultural heritage from climate change, setting clear adaptation pathways in coastal protection, infrastructure, food and water security, health, and disaster risk reduction, while addressing sovereignty and cultural preservation.

48. Tuvalu also supports the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty initiative to phase out the use of fossil fuel and calls on all nations that are serious about confronting the climate crisis to join this initiative and to act decisively to protect our planet and future generations.

Ocean Conservation and Management

49. **Madam President.**

50. Tuvalu has 26 square kilometres of land juxtaposed against 750,000 square kilometres of Exclusive Economic Zone, which makes Tuvalu a large ocean state.
51. As such, the ocean is the lifeblood of our economy, the ocean defines our cultures and heritage, and the ocean is our very source of existence.
52. As custodians of the Pacific Ocean, Tuvalu reaffirms its commitment to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.
53. To that effect, Tuvalu is in the process of developing its first ever national ocean policy not only to coordinate and guide the implementation of our commitments under SDG14, but to also discharge our obligations to save and keep our ocean healthy.
54. Tuvalu has ratified the BBNJ Agreement which has achieved the requisite 60 ratifications threshold to bring it into force.
55. Earlier this year, Tuvalu joined the global community in Nice, France, for the Third United Nations Ocean Conference.
56. In that gathering Tuvalu joined the Ocean Rise & Coastal Resilience Coalition which aims to support coastal cities by planning and implementing the transformations required to address sea level rise.
57. The Nice Ocean conference reminded us that the fate of our ocean cannot be separated from the fight against climate change and sea-level rise.

58. The commitments made in Nice must be carried forward with resolve, including through strengthened partnerships and predictable financing that empower frontline communities to conserve and sustainably use the ocean on their own terms.
59. In recognition of the need for a holistic approach to peace and security, the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders this year endorsed the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration, an initiative that aims to elevate the peace dimension of regional security and promote a Pacific-led vision of stability and resilience.
60. Tuvalu is also proud to announce its firm commitment to co-facilitate the Ocean Pioneers Coalition with France and Panama; and that Tuvalu has joined the Friends of the Ocean and Climate which is an informal and inclusive group to advance ocean-climate actions and discourse.
61. Tuvalu shared the disappointment for the inability of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to finalise on time the development of an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, and urges the leaders and the UN system to continue the work and to expeditiously finalise the negotiation of such a treaty.

Partnership

62. **Madam President,**
63. The principle of 'Better Together' is more than a watchword.
64. It is a powerful affirmation of partnership in the face of increased challenges to multilateralism.
65. The Antigua and Barbados Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), the SAMOA Pathway, and the Pact for the Future are key development frameworks founded on this shared conviction that aligns with SDG 17.
66. Genuine and durable partnership is not a choice but a necessity.

67. It is a principle that continues to shape international cooperation and respond to the unique and persistent challenges that SIDS and LDCs like Tuvalu, continue to face.
68. Tuvalu acknowledges the progress achieved through genuine and enduring partnerships.
69. However, greater global effort remains needed by those at the lower end of the global economic scale, like the LDCs and SIDS.
70. The decadal guide for financial cooperation, dubbed as the *Compromiso de Seville*, fell short of our ambition for a truly transformative global financing framework.
71. Much to our disappointment, there is also the omission of previously agreed climate finance language from the document.
72. Nevertheless, Tuvalu reiterates the call for urgent, scaled-up adaptation finance and the rapid operationalisation and replenishment of the Loss and Damage Fund, including through the innovative use of Special Drawing Rights.
73. Tuvalu remains steadfast in its call for increased grants and concessional financing, improved access to climate change and development funds, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives that are tailored to the special circumstances of SIDS.
74. Moreover, international financial institutions must reconsider eligibility criteria that prevent vulnerable countries from accessing support, simply because of income classifications that do not reflect our exposure to multidimensional risks.
75. For Tuvalu, justice in global finance means recognising that vulnerability cannot be measured by GDP alone.

76. It means valuing resilience, equity, and the right of every nation, large or small, to chart a secure and sustainable future.
77. Timely and targeted assistance is not charity; it's a matter of justice and survival.
78. For the foregoing reasons, Tuvalu has joined the Pacific Resilience Facility which is a Pacific led and Pacific managed facility to cater for the specific adaptation needs of Pacific Island countries in the face of climate change.
79. Tuvalu calls on the international community, especially the developed countries and partner organisations to support the capitalisation of the Pacific Resilience Facility.

Non-communicable Diseases

80. **Madam President.**
81. Non-communicable diseases (NCD) are the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the Pacific region and in the world at large, and Tuvalu is not an exception.
82. Poor diet and obesity, intrinsically linked to the food security challenges are key contributors to this escalating public health concerns.
83. Tuvalu, therefore, welcomes the political commitment demonstrated through the recent adoption of the Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases and the Promotion of Mental Health and Well-being.
84. The acknowledgement of the need for coordinated cross-sectoral actions reflects a spirit of collective responsibility and exemplifies the critical support required by countries most affected by NCDs.

85. At the national level, Tuvalu is fully committed to upholding the commitments outlined in the declaration, in our shared pursuit of achieving the global targets by 2030.

Women and Youth

86. **Madam President.**

87. Earlier this week, we commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action, considered the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights.
88. Tuvalu reaffirms its commitment to gender equality and has taken important steps towards that objective.
89. The Tuvalu Constitution now prohibits discrimination based on sex, embedding gender equality in our highest law.
90. And last year in 2024, Tuvalu adopted a more updated and modern National Gender Equity Policy, to assure women's empowerment and protection from violence are integrated across all sectors.
91. Women rights are not only human rights but are also a foundation of sustainable development, peace and resilience.
92. For Tuvalu, this means ensuring that women are not only included, but are leading in decision-making spaces, from village councils to global negotiations.
93. Equally, Tuvalu places high importance on the role of young people in building a more just, sustainable and inclusive future.
94. As we also marked yesterday the 30th anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth, we take this opportunity to underscore our support for youth development and leadership.

95. We must continue to create the conditions that allow our young people to realise their full potential, as active agents for change, as innovators, and as partners in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
96. Tuvalu recognises that inclusive development cannot be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and youth.

Republic of China (Taiwan) and Cuba

97. **Madam President.**
98. Projecting the principle of inclusivity and leaving no one behind to the UN system, Tuvalu deeply regrets the continued exclusion of the Republic of China (Taiwan) from the United Nations system.
99. As a longstanding and reliable development partner of Tuvalu, Taiwan has consistently demonstrated its commitment to international cooperation, making meaningful contributions across a broad range of development sectors.
100. Tuvalu holds the strong view that the UNGA Resolution 2758 does not preclude Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN system and Tuvalu calls for the admission of Taiwan as a member of the United Nations and its specialised agencies.
101. Similarly, it is regrettable to observe that the people of Cuba continue to bear the economic burden of long-standing unilateral economic sanctions, which deny them crucial international development assistance and partnerships necessary for their recovery and rebuilding efforts.
102. Tuvalu believes that sanctions which isolate and impoverish entire peoples run counter to the spirit of the UN Charter.
103. Tuvalu supports the lifting of those sanctions and joins other Member States in calling for the removal of Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

Commemoration of sovereignty

104. **Madam President.**

105. Next week on the 1st of October will be Tuvalu's forty-seven independence anniversary.

106. Though the births of Tuvalu and the United Nations are a generation apart, Tuvalu remains grateful for the privilege of being a member of the UN and to have engaged and collaborated with the UN family of nations in our common pursuit of advancing the vision of this session, "better together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights".

107. I wish to express my special thanks and sincere gratitude to the United Nations and its member states, in particular Tuvalu's generous traditional and emerging partners for all the support and assistance afforded to Tuvalu.

Conclusion

108. Madam President.

109. In closing, as we engage and interact during this historical 80th Session of the General Assembly, we should do so with full awareness of the complex and formidable challenges that confront our international community.

110. Yet, history has shown us that no challenge is insurmountable when we face it together, in solidarity and unity of purpose.

111. I therefore call upon all Member States of the United Nations family, to move forward in unity, guided by our shared purpose and common mission.

112. Let us remain steadfast in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter, which continue to inspire and give meaning to the vision of this 80th Session.

113. While progress may have not come as swift as we desire, it is far more meaningful when it is achieved collectively.

114. For indeed, when we stand together, united in principle, in purpose, and in resolve, we not only achieve better outcomes, but more enduring, equitable and just.
115. Thank you and we say in Tuvalu, fakafetai lasi.
116. Tuvalu mo te Atua.

END