



Bangladesh

Statement by H.E. Rabab Fatima, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York at the 21st Meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Ocean and Law of the Sea, 14-18 June 2021

I warmly congratulate Co-Chairs, Ambassador Isabelle F. Picco and Ambassador Viliami Va'inga Tone, on their appointment to lead this important meeting. I thank them for organizing this meeting amid the continued challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Co-Chairs,

This Consultative Process on Ocean and Law of the Sea is being organized at a time when we are taking preparations for a number of ocean related UN Conferences, namely, the Second UN Ocean Conference in June 2022 and the 4th BBNJ Conference in early 2022. We expect this consultative process to make important contributions to those upcoming meetings.

We take note of the Secretary-General's reports A/75/70 and A/75/340 reflecting on the adverse impact of sea level rise and its mitigation measures. Sea-level rise is having serious environmental, economic and social implications, and is projected to get more critical in the future. It's an existential threat to many, especially the low-lying coastal states and small island developing countries.

Sea-level rise is integrally linked to climate change and changes in the global mean temperatures. As mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, the dominant causes behind sea-level rise are primarily human induced activities, and its solution lies with us, as well. Failure to do so will be devastating for humanity as a whole; exacerbating existing

vulnerabilities relating to food security, health and livelihoods, and could potentially displace people both within States and across borders. This will jeopardize our hard-earned gains, and the achievement of the SDGs in this final decade.

Co-Chairs,

Bangladesh is a low-lying coastal country with 19 coastal districts which are home to around 42 million people. It is one of the worst affected countries of sea-level rise due to its geographical location and is highly prone to natural disasters such as cyclone, flood, landslide and earthquake. These vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by climate change, although our contribution to climate change is minimal.

Sea-level rise poses an existential threat to the coastal population. Just 1-meter of sea level rise could result into inundation of a large area of Bangladesh, and could potentially displace about 40 million people by the end of this century. 2% of our GDP is lost every year due to natural calamities and environmental degradation. Sea-level induced salinity and other disasters are harming our rice and other crop production significantly, contributing to food insecurity.

To address these vulnerabilities, we have adopted the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009, National Disaster Management Plan, Renewable Energy Policy and other sectoral policies and strategies. Bangladesh put forward quantified emission reduction commitments through its NDCs. We have also developed NDC implementation roadmap together with sectoral mitigation action plans. Over the last decade, we have been spending annually more than US\$ 1 billion additional resources as part of our Annual Development Program to address climate change including sea-level rise. We also created a dedicated Climate Change Trust Fund and allocated so far more than US\$ 415 million to the fund from our own resources for the implementation of both adaptation and resilience in line with Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

Co-Chairs,

The sea-level rise poses challenge to our common future, which is why we need to take care of the root causes of the sea-level rise. I wish to make a few points in this regard:

First, to address the climate and human induced sea-level rise, we call for the timely and effective implementation of the various provisions of the UNCLOS, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, in a coordinated manner to tackle this global challenge.

Second, ocean and sea governance will play instrumental role in mitigating the adverse impact of sea-level rise. To ensure such ocean and sea governance, it is imperative to conclude early the international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). We hope that the 4th Session of the BBNJ scheduled to take place in early 2022, will come up with a productive outcome in this regard.

Third, capacity building and technical assistance remain crucial for the implementation of legal and policy framework to mitigate the adverse impact of sea-level rise, particularly for the developing states. We appreciate the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the nine DOALOS administered voluntary trust funds that assist developing countries in implementing the provisions of UNCLOS and support them in other processes.

Fourth, Finance is the key to all our efforts, be it adaptation, mitigation or technology transfer. Providing necessary financial resources to the vulnerable countries for their adaptation efforts would be the most effective response to the threats posed by sea-level rise.

Finally, to recover from the impacts of sea-level rise and to build back better, we must foster integrated cooperation and coordination at local, regional and international levels, especially in support of the developing and small island states, and coastal communities.

Co-Chairs,

Bangladesh shall remain actively involved in all efforts aimed at addressing the adverse impact of sea-level rise for the well-being of the humanity as a whole. You will have my delegation's full support for a fruitful outcome of this meeting.

I thank you.