



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT OF SINGAPORE,  
AT THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS  
AND THE LAW OF THE SEA, ON AGENDA ITEM 3, GENERAL  
EXCHANGE OF VIEWS,  
11 JUNE 2021**

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Co-Chairs,

The decision in General Assembly resolution 74/19 to focus the discussions of the twenty-first meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea on the theme “Sea-level rise and its impacts” is timely and extremely important.

2 As highlighted in the Secretary-General’s report, sea-level rise due to climate change represents for many small island developing States, including Singapore, the gravest of threats to their survival, viability and prospects for growth, including, for some, through the loss of territory. The Centre for Climate Research Singapore has projected that by 2100, Singapore could experience mean sea-level rise of up to 1 metre. This will lead to an increased risk of flooding in the low-lying areas of Singapore, affecting not only our coastal areas, but also key aspects of our community.

3 It is critical for many countries to start taking steps to mitigate the impacts of sea-level rise. At the national level, Singapore has embarked on a nationwide strategy to protect buildings, developments and critical infrastructure against the threat of sea-level rise. In view of the significant uncertainty with regard to the rate, scale and impact of long-term sea-level rise, Singapore is investing in climate science research and studying the appropriate technological advances and solutions that would hopefully help to deepen the region’s knowledge and adaptation capabilities.

4 At the same time, we recognize that, like climate change, sea-level rise is ultimately a challenge of the global commons that requires a multilateral approach. As the Secretary-General’s report says, an effective response to sea-

level rise necessitates cooperation and coordination of legal, policy and management frameworks at all levels—national, regional and global.

5 We thus welcome the timely and crucial inclusion of the topic “Sea-level rise in relation to international law” in the programme of work of the International Law Commission (ILC), and the ILC’s establishment of an open-ended Study Group on this topic. Singapore hopes that the ILC will, throughout the course of its work on this topic, engage with Member States across all regions, taking into account the diverse interests of States, including those which are particularly vulnerable to the threat of rising sea levels. Singapore is also pleased to have facilitated discussions on the topic through the virtual side event, “Sea-Level Rise and the Law of the Sea”, which Singapore co-organised with Fiji, Jamaica and Mauritius in October 2020. This provided an informal setting for ILC members and Sixth Committee delegates to share perspectives on the ILC’s work, as part of the international community’s efforts to find global solutions for issues arising from sea-level rise.

6 Singapore reaffirms the view, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 75/239, that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out and is of strategic importance as the basis for national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector, and that its integrity needs to be maintained. Just as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement provide the framework for all countries to address climate change, UNCLOS must be the framework within which all law of the sea-related issues pertaining to sea-level rise should be considered. We look forward to continued engagement with other delegations on this important subject.

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