



The Alliance of Small Island States, the Permanent Mission of New Zealand and the Permanent Mission of Peru cordially invite you to a panel discussion on:

## “Sea Level Rise and Implications for International Law”

**Tuesday 23 October, 1.15-2.45pm, Conference Room 7**

**Moderator:** Victoria Hallum, International Legal Adviser, New Zealand

### **Panellists:**

- H.E. Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Permanent Representative of the Maldives
- H.E. Elizabeth Thompson, Permanent Representative of Barbados (TBC)
- Bogdan Aurescu, Patricia Galvão Teles, Nilüfer Oral, and Juan José Ruda Santolaria (International Law Commission members) – joint presentation on the ILC’s decision to include the topic of “sea-level rise in relation to international law” in its long-term Programme of Work: overview of the decision, methodology of work and inputs

### **Concept**

Sea-level rise as a result of climate change is accelerating around the world and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that the average global sea-level could rise by nearly a metre by 2100. Small Island States, particularly low lying ones, are at the front lines of sea level rise. The impacts on communities are more varied and complex than is often assumed. Sea level rise causes salinization which threatens crops and livelihoods, coastal erosion results in more destructive storm surges and natural disasters, and rising sea-levels will submerge whole atolls. While low lying islands are already feeling some of these impacts, in the coming years more than 70 States are likely to be directly impacted by sea-level rise, including continental States with coastal areas.

While sea-level rise poses significant development, economic and environmental challenges, the phenomenon also throws up complex questions in international law, such as:

- What are the legal implications of sea-level rise upon baselines and therefore maritime zones that have been delimited from those baselines?
- What are the consequences for Statehood under international law should a territory of a State disappear? Or if an island becomes uninhabitable due to salinization?
- What protection do persons directly affected by sea-level rise enjoy under international law?

The International Law Commission has recently decided to include “sea-level rise in relation to international law” in its long-term Programme of Work.

Join us for a panel discussion which provides both first-hand accounts of how, in very real terms, sea-level rise is impacting people’s lives in low-lying islands and views from ILC members about the legal questions this phenomenon creates. There will be time for a question and answer session with audience members.