



**PERMANENT MISSION of the
KINGDOM of TONGA to the UNITED NATIONS**

Statement by:

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Delivered at the:

Sixth Committee
75th session of the United Nations General Assembly

Agenda Item 80:

Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its Seventy-second session

Tuesday, 27th October 2020
Combined Conference Rooms 1, 2 & 3
United Nations Headquarters, New York

[Check against delivery]

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation congratulates you on your election and assures you and the members of your bureau of Tonga's full support during this session. It gives me great pleasure to join the discussion of this Agenda item and I would certainly be remiss if I will not give credit where credit is due. And with that, please allow me to acknowledge with gratitude the hard work and dedication of the International Law Commission specifically that rendered by the Study Group through the production of the First issues paper on sea-level rise concerning international law.

Mr. Chairman,

As alluded to in a previous statement by my country, Tonga, there are emerging legal issues and aspects of international law that warrant careful deliberation by the Commission, one of which merits our undivided attention. This is climate change and its ensuing implications of sea level rise. With the accelerated rate of sea level rise projected over the next 20 years, increased by about the same amount which took 60 years to occur, it is threatening us from all angles. The severity of which places our inherent birthright on the line. And for that, our Pacific leaders have consistently echoed the need for urgent climate action in their annual meetings for at least the last 30 years.

Mr. Chairman,

In envisaging the aforementioned, Tonga maintains that the baselines which determine our territorial boundaries, once established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, should remain unchanged despite the effects of sea level rise and any climate change modification that might ensue. Our Sovereignty must not be compromised to that effect.

Mr. Chairman,

We hold in high regard the leading role that is played by the Commission in endeavoring to produce recommendations and guidelines to address our concerns in this regard. And we will continue to support their unrelenting efforts in this process.

I thank you.