



**Statement by Mr. Fred Sarufa
Permanent Representative and Ambassador
of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations**

to the

**Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly
Eightieth Session**

**Agenda Item 80 on the Report of the
International Law Commission (ILC) on the work of its 76th Session:
Cluster I – Report of the International Law Commission (ILC):
Chapters I, II, III and IV on Sea-Level Rise in relation to International Law**

30 October 2025, New York,

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Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished ILC Members, and delegates;

This being the first occasion for my delegation to interact at this Committee's 80th session, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair and your delegation, and the respective Bureau members for your respective mandates.

Let me assure you and all other delegations of our constructive support.

We are pleased to align our remarks with those made by the distinguished representatives of the Solomon Islands, as Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Tuvalu, as Chair of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), and Palau, as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). In my national capacity, we would wish to offer the following points.

Chair,

Papua New Guinea would like to, firstly, warmly welcome to New York and to this Committee's session, the distinguished members of the International Law Commission and for their insightful briefing provided to the Committee.

Secondly, we would like to express our gratitude to the International Law Commission for the tremendous and valued efforts in the preparation of the Report of the Commission's Seventy-Sixth Session.

Our delegation is especially appreciative of Chapter IV on Sea-Level Rise in relation to international law and Annex I containing the Final Report of the Study Group on Sea-Level Rise in relation to international law.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Study Group, and, in particular, the Co-Chairs of the Study Group – Professor Patricia Galvão Teles, Dr. Yacouba Cissé, Dr. Nilufer Oral and Professor Juan Jose Ruda Santolaria. We also recognize the contributions of the previous Co-Chair Professor Bogdan Aurescu, and to also congratulate him on his election to the International Court of Justice.

Chair,

Our delegation broadly supports the conclusions in the Final Report of the Study Group.

We welcome the substantive convergence of certain Study Group conclusions with the relevant 2021 and 2023 Declarations of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) as well as the relevant 2021 and 2024 Declarations of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

We call attention again to these important Declarations and invite States and non-State actors alike to endorse and support these Declarations, including through international cooperation.

We further welcome the broad convergence of certain Study Group conclusions with particular statements in the recent Advisory Opinion on the obligations of States in respect of climate change issued by the International Court of Justice on 23 July 2025.

While broadly supportive of all the conclusions in the Final Report, our delegation wishes to particularly highlight (i) the conclusions on the law of the sea in paragraphs 29 through 34; (ii) the right of peoples to self-determination in paragraphs 38 and 39; and (iii) international cooperation in paragraphs 41 and 48.

Papua New Guinea will closely study the “Possible ways forward” section of the Final Report, in particular regarding possible activities at regional and subregional levels.

We wish to note that the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat is planning a Regional Conference focused on, inter alia, protection of persons in the face of climate-related sea-level rise, which we anticipate to take place next year.

Chair,

We also welcome the Consolidated Report of the Co-Chairs of the Study Group on Sea-Level Rise in relation to international law.

This Consolidated Report will be a useful guide for international lawyers, judges, scholars, and others interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between international law and the challenges of sea-level rise.

We are pleased with the many references to the previous interventions of Papua New Guinea in this Committee that are contained in the Consolidated Report.

In this regard, we wish to call particular attention to the principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resources, including in paragraphs 271, 307 and 431 of the Consolidated Report.

In our view, permanent sovereignty over natural resources is a fundamental cross-cutting principle that is grounded in international law, particularly international human rights law, and inextricably intertwined with the right of peoples to self-determination.

As Paragraph 271 states and, I quote:

“The principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resources should be considered in the context of the possible legal implications of sea-level rise for maritime entitlements as well as for statehood and the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise.” Unquote.

Chair,

Turning now to the Commission’s long-term Programme of Work, our delegation particularly welcomes the inclusion of the topic of “Due diligence in international law.”

Our delegation is especially interested in the concepts of stringency and permeability.

We encourage the Commission to analyse the “stringent” standard of due diligence, as stated by the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea and the International Court of Justice in their respective Advisory Opinions. What does “stringent” mean in various contexts?

We also encourage the Commission to analyse the observation of the International Court of Justice in paragraph 175 of its Advisory Opinion that the distinction between obligations of conduct and obligations of result is “not necessarily an impermeable one.”

Chair,

As I close, my delegation welcomes the appointment of Ms. Penelope Ridings from the Pacific region as Special Rapporteur on the topic of “Due diligence in international law and wish her the best in her mandate.

In closing, my delegation looks forward to working constructively with other delegations and the Commission members on these important topics.

Thank you!