

**Informal Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on
Existential Threats of Sea-level Rise Amidst the Climate Crisis**

*Friday, 3 November 2023, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York*

CONCEPT NOTE

The President of the General Assembly (PGA), H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis will convene an informal plenary meeting of the General Assembly to hear from and engage with eminent speakers and experts on the existential threats of sea-level rise amidst the climate crisis. The meeting, which is scheduled on Friday, 3 November 2023 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am in the ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters, aims to discuss concrete solutions with the membership, observers of the General Assembly and ECOSOC accredited NGOs.

Background

The informal meeting follows up on the Breakfast Summit on Addressing Existential Threats of Sea-level Rise, co-hosted by the President of the General Assembly on 21 September 2023 and attended by 8 Heads of State and Government and 14 Ministers, as well as chiefs of relevant UN entities. The primary outcomes of the Summit were:

- 1) the launch of the Coalition for Addressing Sea-level Rise & its Existential Threats (C-SET) co-chaired by Germany and Tuvalu and supported by a dedicated Champions Group;
- 2) the launch of the Pacific Island Communities Climate Fund to provide small quick impact grants to frontline communities needing quick direct access to funding; and,
- 3) a joint commitment to elevate the existential threats of sea level rise across all multilateral forums.

Subsequent to this Summit, there have been an array of activities by Member States to focus on climate-change induced sea-level rise and related challenges.

Ahead of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Meeting in November 2023, and the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in December 2023, as well as the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) next year, the informal plenary meeting will be timely in galvanizing political action and advancing priority issues on the agenda of the General Assembly such as climate action and climate financing, including by recognizing the unique and special circumstances of the SIDS.

Guiding Questions/Expected Key Messages

As the climate crisis deepens, low-lying countries are already witnessing significant portions of their territory being rendered uninhabitable, and some even facing the prospect of complete inundation from rising sea level. This emergency is particularly imminent and acute for Small Islands Developing

States. In this regard, many Member States have also expressed serious concern that sea-level rise not only threatens their statehood and rights but also the livelihood, culture and heritage of their peoples.

This session will discuss the criticality of:

- Protecting the statehood and maritime territorial integrity of Member States threatened by sea-level rise;
- Safeguarding Member States' culture and heritage; and
- Sustaining Member States' livelihoods and strengthening their socioeconomic resilience.

Preliminary Programme

10:00 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.	Opening by H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly
10:05 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.	Short film on challenges of sea-level rise
10:10 a.m. - 10:40 a.m.	Panel Discussion with invited speakers (5 minutes each)
10:40 a.m. - 11:25 a.m.	Interactive Discussion
11:25 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Closing by H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly

Media

The Informal Plenary meeting will be broadcast live and on-demand by UN WebTV.

Outcome

A short summary of the discussion will be made available in the weeks after the meeting.