



**106th IOM Council
27th of November 2015, Geneva.**

**Statement on behalf of Fiji for the General Debate, delivered by H. E.
Nazhat Shameem Khan, Permanent Representative of Fiji in Geneva.**

Fiji takes this opportunity to warmly welcome the new members of IOM and, in particular, the Republic of Kiribati. We look forward to your active participation in issues that are endemic to our region and we fully support your membership as important step towards achieving a collective voice for our Pacific Islands people.

As a small island developing country, we are too familiar with migration, health and human mobility as consequences of climate change in our region and to ameliorate those effects, with the need for diplomacy and intersectoral partnership both within and outside of the region.

Fiji welcomes the organisation yesterday of a panel discussion on migration, human mobility and global health, as well as the steps taken by the IOM to discuss and develop issues of migration health assistance for crisis affected population. We would be very much be interested in this particular area and to be involved in any programmes developed in relation to it.

Fiji has realised from its own experience and that of the fellow island countries that in the displacement of people in the region due to climate change, the migration has led to adverse health conditions, where the most vulnerable are the women, children and young people.

In the Pacific, at the multilateral level, a recent meeting was held, organised jointly by UNFPA and the Fijian Government, to consider the impact of climate change on women's health, and on the health of babies and adolescents. The resulting set of outcomes, in the Pacific Voice for Action on Agenda 2030 known in the indigenous language as '**KAILA**' was agreed to by Pacific leaders and specifically Pacific Health Ministers. The word Kaila means to shout or yell. In this context the Pacific Island Countries are conveying to the World without any ambiguity the grave and real consequences of climate change on the women and children of the Pacific.

At this meeting the Pacific Island Health Ministers in October 2015 discussed the issue of strengthening climate change resilience through Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health. The Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, to the Samoa Pathway, the Suva Declaration on Climate Change, and to the Global Strategy for Women's Children's and Adolescent's Health. They further recognised the real and potential impacts of climate change on health systems and the resulting displacement of people within and outside of its borders.

Fiji, recognises the specific vulnerabilities of small island countries, the importance of engaging, as equal partners and participation of civil societies, women, girls, young people and persons with disability.

The size and remoteness of Pacific Island Countries makes it particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change that leads to ill-health and eventual relocation of its people to countries within the region. Fiji has had its own experience of the relocation of whole villages to a location and a lifestyle which is totally unfamiliar to them. The situation is even acute on smaller islands and atolls such as Tuvalu and Kiribati, where whole islands and country may soon cease to exist. Fiji, as a result has offered assistance to countries in the region by providing land and refugee to those that will eventually become victims of this global crisis.

Fiji further recognises that it is the women and girls, children and the young people which are most affected by climate change and that such effects include adverse health conditions and difficulties in access to medical care. As such women and men experience the impacts of climate change differently. In particular;

- (i) The discriminatory gender norms reduce or complicate women's access to social and economic resources, which in turn reduces their resilience to disasters and other impacts from climate change such as migration and ill-health and
- (ii) That the specific roles, needs and rights associated with reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent

health, are often invisible in adaptation planning and response processes.

Climate change in the Pacific Ocean region will continue to exacerbate chronic crisis in relation to food and water security, placing more and more people at risk of hunger and our women and children to malnutrition.

We reiterate that health challenges are particularly severe for those living in islands whose livelihoods are consistently threatened by climate change. Therefore, diplomacy at all levels, at regional and international level is required as well as Inter Sectoral Partnership.

Fiji therefore appreciates that such an important topic has been chosen for discussion at this segment of the 106th Council of the International Organisation for Migration. The topic is both contemporary and urgent.

Thank you.