



107th IOM Council

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Statement on behalf of Fiji for the General Debate, Delivered by DPR Kumar, Representative of the Republic of Fiji in Geneva

Good morning Chair and fellow delegates,

At the Outset, Fiji Congratulates the efforts of Tonga in pursuing membership in the IOM. We look forward to supporting Tonga into the IOM family.

Fiji wishes to reiterate and recognize the role we all have as an international community to approach migration in a peaceful, efficient and respectful manner. We must consider that many migrants move out of sheer survival, exercising their right to life, when put in dire situations of violence, famine, poverty and environmental ruins. We must therefore identify our responsibility to assist them and not further add to their suffering.

The Pacific Islands has identified a cause for migration in its own region as a threatening issue in the years to come. Our remoteness and size, makes us the most vulnerable in the world to climate change with the urgency of the situation, the need for diplomacy, comradery and intersectoral partnership both within and outside the region is critical to preserve our communities. This looming challenge threatens more than a billion people who live in low lying coastal regions around the world. It is for this reason that the Fijian Delegation proposes further

dialogue, investigation and action in regards to the people that will experience migration due to rising sea levels.

This situation is acute on smaller islands and atolls such as Tuvalu and Kiribati. Without hesitation Fiji welcomes, with open arms, those who flee these dismal circumstances. Fiji pledges assistance and refuge, within its capacity, to those that will eventually become victims to this global crisis and urges those who can assist us in doing so to step forward and collaborate in partnership to save the people of the Pacific.

Fiji has acted upon this threat by taking a leadership role in other related forum such as the Presidency of COP23 and co-hosting with Sweden the Oceans Conference. Fiji will also take a strong position at the Disaster Risk Reduction Global Compact in Mexico next year. Furthermore, Fiji will also be advancing a resolution in the Human Rights Council to further promote human rights based action relating to climate change induced migration. We also highly value the work of IOM to, confront the migration issue in relation to climate change.

Fiji underscores to the IOM and this conference that women, children and the young will be the most vulnerable under climate change induced catastrophes. Their access to medical care and satisfactory living conditions is paramount.

The chain effect of rising seas will exacerbate chronic food crisis' and water security, pushing more people into malnutrition, disease and potentially promoting internal violence when the situation intensifies. It will also affect socio-economic development. Therefore, diplomacy and coordinated efforts at all levels, international, regional governmental and non-governmental, will be the answer to saving lives by preparing the community, organizing migration strategies, establishing new homes and providing access to health care.

The IOM has been important since its inception, however it's undeniable that this organization's work load has increased dramatically in recent years and will no doubt only escalate considering the growth of driving forces of migration. IOM's Migration Governance framework is a helpful commencement for States who wish to abide by the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, further pragmatic approaches are required for the trying challenges of the near future.

People are on the move, either by want or need. We know seas levels are rising; climatic catastrophes are increasing in frequency and power; enviornmental disasters are inevitable. With this knowledge we have an opportunity to prepare many who will indeed have to move sooner rather than later by formulating mitigation strategies and prepare ourselves for what is to come. As Fiji extends a helping hand to its neighbours in need, we call on others to do the same.

Fiji looks forward to actively participating at this session of the IOM.

Thank you.