Hon. Inia Seruiratu
Minister for Defense, National Security and Policing, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management

Pre-recorded Official Statement on the Global Platform 2022

Theme: Opportunity to take stock of progress and challenges in reducing disaster risks and to identify good practice to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework at the local, regional & global level

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman, Bula Vinaka and warm greetings from Fiji.

The Global Platform for DRR provides an excellent opportunity for countries to share experiences and the challenges we face in the implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The International community is looking at the way we do things as a family of nations, moving away from business as usual, and is calling for transformational changes.

Therefore, we acknowledge the theme for this year: From Risk to Resilience: Towards Sustainable Development for All in a COVID-19 Transformed World.
In 2019, Fiji achieved a milestone in its commitment towards Target E of the Sendai Framework\(^1\), where the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (NDRRP) was launched by our Honourable Prime Minister. The NDRRP is the first step towards localising the Sendai framework into Fiji’s context and mainstream DRR across all sectors.

Furthermore, the Fijian Government has adopted a risk informed development approach to mainstream DRR and Climate Change Adaptation into subnational level policies, agency plans and project funding. This approach ensures that disaster and climate change risk measures are integrated into the project management cycles with upgraded standard operating procedures and new project proposal templates.

The Fijian Government has also invested in build-back-better approaches. Following Tropical Cyclone Winston, thirty two (32) schools were rebuilt to more resilient standards. These schools were again in the path of another Category 5 super-storm, Cyclone Yasa in 2020 and required only limited repairs and were functioning

\(^1\) Fiji, First In The World To Validate Target E On Sendai Framework. Can be accessed from https://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/FIJI,-FIRST-IN-THE-WORLD-TO-VALIDATE-TARGET-E-ON-S#:~:text=Disaster%20Risk%20Reduction%20Officer%20of,for%20the%20Sendai%20Framework%20Monitor.
within weeks. This is the same with essential infrastructure such as roads and health centres that were built after 2016.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022 emphasizes that the best defence against future shocks is to transform systems now, to build resilience by addressing climate change and to reduce the vulnerability, exposure and inequality that drive disasters.

Fiji has taken steps to minimize the impact of climate change, where it has committed to the 100% sustainable management of our oceans by 2030\(^2\), and the protection of its existing maritime boundaries irrespective of the changes to coastlines due to sea level rise as mandated in the Fiji Climate Change Act 2021\(^3\).

Ladies and Gentlemen, Fiji’s progress in DRR could only be possible through meaningful partnerships with line ministries, local, regional and international partners. Over the years we have established good networks through various regional mechanisms. For instance, the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway for COVID Regional Taskforce (PHP-C RTF) that is established under the Pacific Islands Forum.

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\(^2\) Attorney-General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum's Speech At the 7th Our Ocean’s Conference. Can be accessed from https://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/Speeches/English/AG-ASK-SPEECH-7TH-OUR-OCEAN-CONFERENCE-PALAU

The taskforce has been supporting member countries through flight and cargo arrangements for delivery of humanitarian supplies during the pandemic.

At the National Level, Fiji utilizes the Cluster system to coordinate and collaborate with all key stakeholders involved in DRR. It is a Government-led humanitarian and DRR coordination mechanism that currently operates at the national strategic level. This has substantially improved our communication and coordination between government and non-government partners, especially during disaster operations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the annual economic losses due to disasters in the Pacific Small Island Development States (SIDS) are more than double the previous estimates, at US$ 1billion or nearly 5 per cent of the combined GDP for the Pacific SIDS.

Having said that, disaster risk financing is critical in building resilience especially for Pacific SIDS. We cannot do this alone and we acknowledge the support of our development partners that have assisted us and continue to support our efforts to address disaster risks and the challenges of climate change. However,

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4 https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/IDD-APDR-Subreport-Pacific-SIDS.pdf
much more remains to be done, including the need to make DRR financing facilities more accessible and flexible.

To conclude, I would like to echo the same call for action as highlighted in the latest IPCC Report that the opportunity for action is NOW, and any further delay in concerted global action is a direct threat to our planet and our future livelihood.

Fiji is looking forward to continue these conversations with the DRR community at the Global Platform for DRR in Bali.

Terima kasih, Vinaka Vakalevu and Thank You

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