GOVERNMENT OF TUVALU

**TUVALU STATEMENT**

**Delivered by**

**The Right Honourable Enele S Sopoaga**

**PRIME MINISTER**

**The Third Universal Periodic Report to the UN Human Rights Council**

**Geneva**

 **Geneva 9th May 2018**

**(Check Against Delivery)**

The President of the Human Rights Council

Commissioner of Human Rights

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my privilege to present Tuvalu’s Third Universal Periodic Review. First, let me assure the Council of Tuvalu’s unwavering commitment to the noble values and principles of the UN as enshrined in its Charter, and the ensuing universal declarations on Human Rights. Tuvalu believes the UPR process continues to be relevant and is an effective mechanism to ensuring the effective promotion and protection of human rights in Tuvalu and worldwide.

Second, let me extend my Government’s great appreciation to the Council and UN Members for your continuing recognition of the special case of Tuvalu as a SIDS and LDC especially of our unique vulnerabilities to impacts of environmental degradation and climate change. Through the course of our past two UPR cycles you have stood by us. I appeal for this help to continue.

Third and as a final opening point, Tuvalu, despite our unique vulnerabilities, is fully committed to maximizing our sovereign rights towards the sustainable livelihood and security of her people. As a huge oceans-SIDS, the maximizing of the value of maritime fishery and mineral resources, and properly managing our EEZ boundaries and baselines is central to our efforts to cater for the needs and serving the basic rights, and dignity of our people. We are committed to this work.

**President**

Tuvalu believes that achieving human rights goals calls for constant dialogue, engagement and coordination among various stakeholders. As a responsible member of the United Nations, my country remains committed towards meaningful engagement with our people, island communities, our youth, women and the disabled and the international community.

The preparation of our Third UPR, as for the past two Reviews, was made through an inclusive and consultative process. We treated it as an opportunity to receive feedback on our laws, policies and the implementation of human rights norms and standards articulated in Tuvalu’s Bill of Rights and aspired in the Tuvalu’s National Strategy for Sustainable Development(NSSD *Te Kakeega III*).

We followed a broad-based consultative approach that is inclusive and constructive. The report that is with you aims at enabling engagement, conversation, and dialogue on a range of themes and issues. To this end, this national report highlights the achievements, challenges and constraints that we would like to share with you, and lays out the way forward as Tuvalu’s strategy for the promotion and protection of human rights, with particular reference to the following:

1. **Constitution Requirements and Review of the Constitution;**
2. **Tuvalu NSSD Te Kakeega III, and Human Rights**
3. **Climate Change Impacts and Human Rights of Tuvaluans**
4. **Traditional Standards, Values and Practices;**
5. **Judiciary Decisions**
6. **International Conventions;**
7. **Legislation; and**
8. **Policies**

**President**

Before summarizing on the above, however, allow me to assert that the fundamental human rights of Tuvaluans as a people, and of Tuvalu as a sovereign State, is grossly challenged by Tuvalu’s unique vulnerabilities to external forces that are simply beyond our capability to cope.

Since our first and last UPR reports, there has been the unfolding adverse impacts of the 2008 global economic crisis even to far-flung nations as my own, resulting in the severe loss of employment of our trained seafarers on merchant ships worldwide, loss in our foreign investment in our Tuvalu Trust Fund, and loss of revenue from remittances. There has also been severe tropical cyclones hitting the islands, increased erosion, salinity in fresh-water, long droughts, and many other environmental degradation in what we strongly believe are the effects of climate change and sea-level rise.

As an LDC and SIDS, Tuvalu was largely left to fend for itself and to ensure the provision of services vital to the promotion and protection of the human rights of its people. Even without referring to the rule of law, it is simply humanitarian for Tuvalu to allocate its own resources to pay for itself out of the woods. We appreciate those Partners, especially our close partners New Zealand, Australia, Japan, EU, and the Republic of China, who helped us in the time of need.

Unless the Human Rights Council and UN Members fully recognize these unique vulnerabilities of Tuvalu and of SIDS, and these are properly translated into urgent concrete actions to respond to the problem of climate change, and actions to provide special SIDS windows of partnerships, our fundamental rights to sustainable development and to survive as a people, espoused by this very UN body, will be severely compromised. This noble body must also walk the talk.

**Mr President**

In regards to the Constitution, Tuvalu’s Constitution which allows for the full recognition of human rights, continues to be recognized as the Supreme and Basic Law of the Land. It is the the basic law of Tuvalu, from which the protection and promotion of the human rights and freedoms are derived and based. Additionally, all laws, and all acts done under a law, must be reasonably justifiable and democratic. In addition, the Courts may have regard to: (a) traditional standards, values and practices, as well as previous laws and judicial decisions, of Tuvalu; and (b) law, practices and judicial decisions of other countries that the court reasonably regards as democratic; and (c) international conventions, declarations, recommendations and judicial decisions concerning human rights.

Within its meagre resources, Tuvalu will continue to work towards the full realisation of human rights for the people of Tuvalu especially in national implementation efforts in all sectors of development and community.

**President**

**Tuvalu Mo Te Atua** is Tuvalu’s national creed which can be translated as “Tuvalu for the Almighty” and foundation of our social and cultural beliefs. This national creed encapsulates our belief, tradition, custom, values, practices, norms and standards, which are given by God. The right of the people of Tuvalu, both present and future, to a full, free and happy life, and to moral, spiritual, personal and material welfare, is affirmed as one given to them by God.

Tuvaluan traditional standards, values and practices form an integral part of communal way of life in Tuvalu. It also sets traditionally accepted norms and standards on how local and traditional governance system is enforced and maintained. Tuvaluan traditional standards, values and practices are key in maintaining strong, effective communal relationships, which promotes respect, tolerance and regards for human dignity.

Amongst the values that the people of Tuvalu seek to maintain, are their traditional forms of communities, the strength and support of the family and family discipline. In government, and in social affairs generally, the guiding principles of Tuvalu are — agreement, courtesy and the search for consensus, in accordance with traditional Tuvaluan procedures, rather than alien ideas of confrontation and divisiveness; the need for mutual respect and co-operation between the different kinds of authorities concerned, including the central Government, the traditional authorities, local governments, and the religious authorities.

**President**

A Constitutional review is currently underway and significant to the proposed Constitutional changes, is the inclusion of gender and disability as a non-discrimination ground. The Government of Tuvalu believes that adding gender and disability to the revised Constitution is consistent with Tuvalu’sobligations under international human rights conventions (CEDAW, CRC, CRPD, etc…).

Also to be considered in the Review are issues of models and structure of governance, the traditional and cultural rights of island communities, the response to climate change, and social impact of cybercrime. The Review, which is ongoing through nation-wide consultations, is to be finalized in 2019.

**President**
On SDGs, Tuvalu is committed to achieving the targets of the UN Development Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. In its National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD), Te Kakeega III 2015-2020, formulated in 2015 – and titled ‘Protect and Save Tuvalu’, and with the vision for a more protected, secure and prosperous Tuvalu, healthier people who are more engaged in national, regional and international forums, the Government has committed to 12 areas of priority critical concerns including strong targets on climate change, governance, outer islands development, social development, infrastructure development and oceans.

By way of the TKIII roadmaps, services to all people of Tuvalu are well provided and assured so that education is free for universal access, literacy rate is high, medical services is paid for by the GOT including a very costly TMTS, and access to electricity is almost 100% to every single Tuvaluan. Tuvalu’s per capita income is at $10,000. There is still the urgent need to improve infrastructures.

Throughout these sectors the inclusive distribution of services to all people of Tuvalu is the underlining approach – GOT is ensuring that no-one Tuvaluan is left behind and that the basic human rights of Tuvaluans are protected.

**Mr President**

Climate change is the most serious existential threat to the security and survival of Tuvaluans as a people and Tuvalu as a sovereign State. There is urgency for concrete actions to reduce GHG emissions and to provide adequate funding for mitigation and adaptation actions for SIDS like Tuvalu.

As noted in the SAMOA Pathway for SIDS, the SDGs, and recently in the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Leaders’ Statement, Climate Change is the most single serious threat to the livelihood of SIDS and has called for a new paradigm shift of response ad actions by the international community to achieve concrete adaptation actions and particularly the one-point-five target – ‘to save SIDS, and to save the world’.

The increasing frequency of climate change related extreme weather events, storm surges, rising sea-levels, heat waves, droughts, water shortages, ocean acidification and coral bleaching is a major concern for Tuvalu. These phenomena directly and indirectly threaten the full and effective enjoyment of a range of human rights by Tuvaluans. It affects their right to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination, culture and development. Additionally, climate change poses a serious threat to the very existence of Tuvaluan’s, fundamental rights and freedoms. If livelihoods are lost, dignity is denied. Climate change has the potential to threaten the territory and sovereignty of Tuvalu.

Tuvalu is currently very active in the development of the Implementation Guidelines on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We are members of the Friends of Human Rights and Climate Change and co-sponsor regular events of the group in Bonn, Germany.

In addition to our work in support of the Paris Agreement, Tuvalu has two significant initiatives related to climate change, namely:

*(a) Pacific Islands Climate Change Insurance Facility;*

 *(b) UN General Assembly Resolution to give Protection to People Displaced by the impacts of Climate Change.*

On the Pacific Island Climate Change Insurance Facilitywe aim to establish a regional facility that will be able to investigate and develop risk transfer products to suit the individual needs of Pacific Island countries. The clear message is that one size does not fit all. Various products will be developed so as to be fit for purpose. It is anticipated that the PICCI Facility will develop the following arrangements as:

(a) index/parametric based risk transfer/insurance scheme;

(b) indemnity insurance;

(c) clearing house for risk transfer product options;

(d) Industry monitoring to investigate investments by insurance industry to ensure they are climate friendly;

The UN General Assembly Resolution recognises that there is a growing number of people displaced by the impacts of climate change. These people are either displaced internally or across borders. These persons are not defined as refugees under the *1951 Refugee Convention* as they are not fleeing conflict or persecution (although this may be the case in certain circumstances). As they are not legally defined as refugees, these displaced persons are not afforded proper protection of their rights to safety, food and shelter and avoidance of violence and other basic human rights.

This resolution aims to establish an international legal agreement to afford these displaced people adequate rights and also sets in place measures to prevent or limit the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

The resolution establishes a process to commence negotiations of a legal agreement to create the necessary rights of people displaced by climate change or natural disasters. While the intention is to create similar rights for displaced persons, currently given to refugees, some solutions relating to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters may be quite different. Actions under the new legal agreement would help steer a path towards preventative measures and durable solutions. Actions to help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change are anticipated to be included in the agreement.

On the ground, Tuvalu is mainstreaming climate change actions into NSSD and the budget. It has established its own Tuvalu Climate Change Survival Fund, and national strategies on its NDCs, and NAPs. It has embarked on the GCF funded TCAP to construct protective sea-walls for all the islands of Tuvalu. Education and Capacity building in this regard is extremely vital as a long term adaptation strategy of Tuvalu – more educated population will cope better with CC and SLR.

Relocation of Tuvaluans to other lands is not an option, the GOT is fully committed to protecting and saving Tuvalu against the onslaught of climate change, and I call on the international community to do what is right, and do the right things in the right way as provided under the Paris Agreement. We in SIDS are not sinking, not giving up. This UN/HRC is duty-bound, fully responsible, and morally obligated to provide leadership to keep the ‘world canoe buoyant’, and avoid all nations, our youth and our future get drowned to climate change.

**President**

Tuvalu has ratified three of the core human rights treaties (CRC, CEDAW and CRPD) and has made progress with regards to national implementation. Tuvalu will continue to hold national consultations and dialogue regarding the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

**President**

In January 2017, a National Human Rights Action Plan was launched which aims to enshrine human rights in the country's development priorities. The plan was the outcome of consultations with government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities to identify human rights priorities. This means that the marginalised, the old and young; men, women and children, and people with disabilities will now be included in the country's development projects (a more inclusive approach). The Action Plan notes that human rights and culture are not opposing concepts but mutually reinforcing in that they promote the entitlements and privileges of all Tuvaluan’s to live a life that protects their humanity and dignity.

**President**

Cabinet has made decisions regarding the protection of human rights nationally by approving cabinet endorsed committees and work progress with regards to its commitments to human rights norms and standards, particularly the:

1. National Human Rights Institution of Tuvalu Bill 2017 and Leadership Amendment Bill 2017;
2. Progressive Update on Human Rights Treaty Reports and legislative Reviews on Child Protection;
3. Report of the Scoping Study Team on the Feasibility and Options for the Establishment of a National Human Rights Institution;
4. Human Rights National Action Plan for Tuvalu 2016 - 2020;
5. National Advisory Committee for Children and Technical Working Group Terms of Reference;
6. Committee on the Rights of the Child - Seeking Tuvalu’s support 2019 - 2022;
7. Human Rights for Good Governance and Development in Tuvalu; and
8. Motion on Denarau 2015 Declaration on Human Rights and Good Governance.

**President**

Tuvalu has made tremendous progress with regards to the national implementation of human rights norms and standards. Progress to date has included the amendments to legislation and development of new legislation and policies namely the:

1. *Island Courts (Amendment) Act 2017;*
2. *Tobacco Control (Amendment) Act 2017;*
3. *Alcoholic Drinks (Amendment) Act 2017;*
4. *The Leadership (Amendment) Act 2017;*
5. *Marriage (Amendment) Act 2017;*
6. *The National Human Rights Institution Act 2017;*
7. *Labour and Employment Relations Act 2017.*

A draft *Child Protection and Welfare Bill* *2017* and the draft *Policy for the* P*rotection of All Children in Educational Institutions in Tuvalu,* is currently under consideration with the relevant government stakeholders. It is envisaged that the proposed *Child Protection and Welfare Bill* will be submitted to parliament in its next sitting of 2018, for its deliberation and consideration.

Additionally, Tuvalu informs the Council that consequential amendments to other laws have been made namely:

(a) Penal Code [Cap 10.20] Section 39 of the Penal Code [Cap 10.20];

(b) Prisons Act [Cap 20.28];

(c) Education (Compulsory Education) Order 1984 [Cap 30.05.4]; and

(d) Gaming and Lotteries Act [Cap 54.10]

to comply with international commitments to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*Section 29 of the Education Act* states that no teacher, other than a head-teacher, shall administer corporal punishment to any pupil[[1]](#footnote-1). Thishas been repealed in its entirety as it contradicts the principles enshrined in the CRC in protecting and respecting the rights and dignity of children. The amendment prohibits corporal punishment in any form and manifestation.

The *Island Court (Amendment) Act No 5 of 2017* provides protection for children within the island court setting on the treatment of young offenders. The amendment is aimed at abolishing physical punishment as a form of criminal sentence by the Island Courts.

**President**

Tuvalu informs the Human Rights Council that Cabinet in its *Special Meeting 13/12 on the 15 March 2012*[[2]](#footnote-2) endorsed the proposal to accede to the Rome Statute which establishes and governs the International Criminal Court (ICC). It is envisaged that the accession to the Rome Statute will be progressively realised before the next reporting cycle. In addition, the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the ICC will be progressively realised after national formal process have been adhered to.

Tuvalu also informs the Council that cabinet has also approved the ratification of the two CRC Optional Protocols.

**President**

Tuvalu in 2017 passed the National Human Rights Institution Act. The National Human Rights Institution Act 2017 is aimed at providing a relevant mechanism to ensure the full promotion and protection of fundamental freedom. The Act aims at allowing access to a government system that will address abuse of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It will allow persons with disabilities with a mechanism to address their issues and concerns. Persons with disabilities can also access the national human rights institutions with advocacy and awareness initiatives.

**President**

The Office of the Chief Ombudsman prominently include strict adherence to, and administration and enforcement of, the Leadership Code Act, and public service training in good governance. Tuvalu informs the Council that in order to effectively enforce the Leadership Code, it recognises that the Ombudsman needs the full support of government. The Ombudsman Office is neutral, and immune from institutional or political interference. It has a constitutional authority to act in the public’s best interest, in the same way as the Attorney General, Auditor General and Commissioner of Police (all three are constitutional offices). The Ombudsman has the following functions:

(a) to enquire into any complaints or allegation of misconduct on the part of any leader;

(b) to enquire into any defects in administrative practice appearing from any matter being enquired into;

(c) to enquire into any case of an alleged or suspected discriminatory practice by a leader;

(d) to give prior advice on potential breaches of the Leadership Code;

(e) to investigate and report on any complaints of any alleged breaches of the Code[[3]](#footnote-3).

Additionally, the Ombudsman shall comply with directions given or made under the Code, otherwise it is not subject to direction or control by any other person or authority[[4]](#footnote-4).

The Leadership Code (Amended) Act 2017 was passed in Parliament in its second reading in 2017. The amendments include hosting the national human rights institution. This will allow Tuvaluans greater access to the services provided by the NHRI, including persons with disabilities. It is envisaged that one of the key roles of the Ombudsman Office is to educate the people of Tuvalu on human rights issues including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other core human rights Treaties and Covenants.

**President**

The government of Tuvalu has in place a ***Policy for the Protection of Children in all Educational Institutions in Tuvalu***. The policy specifically applies to students under the age of 18 years. Additionally, it provides a framework for the protection, identification, managing and reporting incidents of child abuse in schools and educational institutions whenever school activities and programs are conducted or provided. The Policy states that:

1. all children in Tuvaluan schools are entitled to enjoy the rights and protections afforded to them under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
2. all staff employed in Tuvaluan schools are responsible for the care, safety and protection of children in the school or educational institution;
3. this responsibility extends to the identification and timely response to concerns regarding the possible sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child;

(d) the Department of Education has a policy of zero tolerance in relation to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

The ***Tuvalu National Gender Policy 2014-2016*** embarked on a significant policy shift from the former focus on women in development to the broader concept of gender development with a stronger focus on engaging men and boys at all levels of its implementation. The policy strategic approach aims at achieving five priority outcomes:

(a) increase capacity within all sectors of Government to address key issues of concern in achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment;

(b) reflect Government’s commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment in legislation and in sector policies affecting Government and civil society;

(c) create an enabling environment for the full participation of women in economic development;

(d) measures to ensure access by women and men to participate in decision-making as means to enhance leadership and governance at all levels; and

(e) eliminating all forms of violence against women.

The *Tuvalu National Policy on Disability* sets out a comprehensive framework to address the needs and rights of persons with disabilities to improve the quality of their lives and their full and equal participation as empowered citizens. This is a reflection of Tuvalu’s vision of a disability-inclusive and barrier-free society where persons with disabilities are able to enjoy all human rights on an equal basis with others, and to live with dignity. This also reflects the key principles and core values of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), in particular the:

1. principles of non-discrimination;
2. respect for inherent dignity; and
3. full and effective participation and inclusion.

The ***Tuvalu National Youth Policy*** fulfils the Tuvalu Government’s commitment to its young women and men. The Policy illustrates the commitment and recognition of the Government and the society as a whole to empower its youth, regardless of race, religion, gender and disabilities.

The commitment is to:

1. provide every opportunity to develop the personal, physical, social, economic, mental and spiritual potential of youth; and
2. to encourage them to positively participate in nation building and to shape their future.

The Policy stresses the need for the Government Departments, Non-Government Organisations’, Churches, the private sector and the community to make concerted efforts to address issues affecting the lives of youth. It details information on the various issues affecting youth and outlines broad strategies to address such issues.

The ***Sustainable and Integrated Water and Sanitation Policy 2012–2021*** is a response to recent water crises, and to ensure together we stand ready for future challenges. The purpose of the WSP is to ensure that the people of Tuvalu have continued access to safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable water and sanitation facilities. The policy supports Tuvalu’s key planning document, Te Kakeega III (National Strategy for Sustainable Development), as well as key pacific regional framework such as the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Water Management.

**President**

Tuvalu in March 2018 submitted its combined 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th report to the UN CRC committee. The combined report outlines Tuvalu’s responses to the recommendation received from its first report. It also outlines progress made in the area of children’s rights, challenges faced and more importantly commitments made to the further protection of children’s rights in Tuvalu.

**President**

Tuvalu informs the Council that it is currently working on its 5th national report on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. As normal national process dictates, a nation-wide consultation is planned and views of the community including stakeholders will be sought to assist in the compilation of the national report. Tuvalu calls upon the international community for technical and financial assistance with regards to the compilation of the national CEDAW report.

**President**

The Government of Tuvalu ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2013. The Government of Tuvalu also wishes to inform the Council that the Office of the Attorney General in partnership with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development have completed the initial report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has in place the Tuvalu National Policy on Disability 2017 - 2021.

The Tuvalu National Policy on Disability sets out a comprehensive framework to address the needs and rights of persons with disabilities to improve the quality of their lives and their full and equal participation as empowered citizens. This is a reflection of Tuvalu’s vision of a disability-inclusive and barrier-free society where persons with disabilities are able to enjoy all human rights on an equal basis with others, and to live with dignity[[5]](#footnote-5). This also reflects the key principles and core values of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability which Tuvalu acceded to in 2013, in particular the principles of non-discrimination, respect for inherent dignity, and full and effective participation and inclusion.

**President**

In line with its commitments to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Cabinet endorsed the establishment of a national coordinating body called the National Advisory Committee for Children’s Rights (herein referred to as “NACCR”) to provide oversight, advise and coordination for all national efforts on the reporting and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee consists of representatives from government ministries, non-government organisations, faith-based organisations, schools, educational institutions, regional organisations, students and Island Council.

A Technical Working Group has been established and it provides technical support to the NACCR. The TWG also performs other duties and responsibilities directed by the NACCR that is related to the reporting and implementation of the CRC.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The NACCR is responsible for overall national coordination of the CRC in Tuvalu.

**President**

Tuvalu has set up a Tuvalu National Disability Coordinating Committee to have an oversight and coordination role ensure the protection and full enjoyment of the human rights of persons with disabilities

**President**

The Government of Tuvalu currently have in a place a *Support Scheme for the Most Vulnerable Persons with Disability*. The aim of the support scheme came into force on the 1st January 2016. The support scheme recognizes that persons with disabilities live in conditions of poverty, and in this regard recognizing the critical need to address the negative impacts of poverty of persons with disabilities in Tuvalu.

The Scheme provides financial assistance to persons with disabilities and is managed and administered by the Secretary of Home Affairs. The beneficiary under the scheme is entitled to receive a payment of AUD$70.00 per month – the GOT, not the Human Right Council, is paying for these measures.

**President**

Currently, Tuvalu is working on a baseline survey for the Family protection Act 2014. The baseline study is aimed at identifying key stakeholders and government ministries that play an important role in the enforcement of the Family and Domestic Violence Protection Act. It is also aimed at gathering data and statistics on the prevalence of violence against women in Tuvalu. The main focus of the baseline survey is improving the reporting and enforcement of cases for violence against women.

**President**

We have also encountered challenges in our endeavors in implementing our human rights obligations. Some of the challenges we have encountered include:

(a) lack of technical and specialist expertise;

(b) lack of financial support;

(c) securing durable and genuine partnerships;

(d) climate change issues;

(e) geographical isolation of Tuvalu location of the outer islands — transportation to name a few.

Tuvalu calls upon the international community for their assistance in this regard and looks forward to continuing support from the international community.

**Mr President, Excellencies**

In closing, this UPR appraisal, as distinguished Members of the Council will appreciate is a mouthful and handful piece for a SIDS and LDC like Tuvalu to deliver. My delegation and I have travelled half-way round the globe, with heavy carbon foot prints, to satisfy the requirements of our HRC/UN to report on what Tuvalu is doing on the protection of the human rights of our people.

May I now ask, what has the HRC done to support such a resource-starving nation like Tuvalu to protect and provide for the basic rights of our poor people. Where is the UN or HRC in the Pacific, during our hour of need on climate change disasters like TC PAM. UN/HRC is invisible in our part of the world.

I urge the HRC and the UN to seriously re-consider my very appeal when I presented Tuvalu’s first UPR report in 2009, the UN/HRC must establish a physical presence in Tuvalu and the Pacific for durable, responsive and genuine partnerships on human rights.

For this, I want to register Tuvalu’s gracious appreciation to the Government of Australia for its decision to establish a full-fledged High Commission in Tuvalu. I pray this could a critical conduit for others including our close allies New Zealand and others and the UN/HRC to follow – we will welcome you in Tuvalu.

On this note, at the end of next month I will be hosting the Polynesian Leaders Group Summit in Funafuti, Tuvalu, during which there will be extensive dialogue – Sautalaaga – on climate change and biodiversity in SIDS. I invite you the HRC representatives to please visit Tuvalu, and see for yourself our unique beauty and culture and exposure to the elements of climate change and sea level rise.

I also invite you to the PIF Leaders Summit which Tuvalu is hosting in the fall of next year in Tuvalu. You will be most welcome.

Finally, thank you Mr. President and all our development partners Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the EU, Republic of Korea, India, UK, COMSEC, Turkey, UAE, the ROC/Taiwan, the GEF, GCF, ADB, World Bank, UNDP, UNEP and others that I have not mentioned.

Your partnership is critical as Tuvalu strives to fully realise its commitments to fundamental human rights protection and promotion of our people. Our next UPR will report on the implementation of these lines of partnership.

Again, I urge and call on the international community, and especially the HRC to please hear the voices of Tuvalu and Pacific, and all SIDS, especially our youth and women and the disabled to urgently honour our responsibility with actions on adaptation and to urgently reduce GHG emissions towards ‘One-Five to Save Tuvalu, to Save the World’.

**Fafetai lasi. Tuvalu mote Atua.**

1. Additionally, if a head-teacher administers corporal punishment to any pupil, he shall record details of the punishment administered and the offence for which the corporal punishment was administered in a book to be kept at the school for that purpose. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cabinet Decision - M067-12.Internatonal Criminal Court statute. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. s38 Leadership Code Act 2008 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. s47 Leadership Code Act 2008 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Tuvalu National Policy on Disability values the following: (a) respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence of persons; (b) non-discrimination; (c) full and effective participation and inclusion in society; (d) respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity; (e) equality of opportunity; (f) accessibility; (g) equality between men and women; (h) respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities and (i) uphold Tuvalu cultural land spiritual values that highlights inclusive family and communal life. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Technical Working Group is also responsible for providing technical support to the NACCR on CRC reporting and implementation. The NACCR works directly with line-ministries in identifying issues to be discussed at NACCR meetings and coordinating and facilitating preparations for the NACCR meetings. The TWG also work as an advisory role advising the Minister and members of the NACCR. In consultation with the Office of the Attorney-General, provides support for research, consultation and other work required for the development of new or amendments to policies, guidelines and others relating to children. The TWG also work with UNICEF and other development partners where technical or other support is needed. The TWG also prepares briefing minutes and notes and other information for NACCR when required/necessary, on issues relating to child rights. In addition, the TWG also conducts other work deemed necessary to ensure that it functions in an effective manner. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)