Thank you, Mr President.

Climate change is an urgent global challenge and the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the Pacific.

That is why it is so important that Pacific voices are at the centre of international climate discussions.

We commend Vanuatu’s climate leadership, including in driving this important initiative in partnership with the core group, for an International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on climate change.

We know that climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of disasters globally.
Indeed – as we meet here today – Vanuatu is recovering from the devastating impacts of two consecutive category 4 cyclones earlier this month.

Our hearts are with Vanuatu.

Australia, with the rest of the Pacific family, will continue to support the Ni-Vanuatu people as they recover and strengthen their resilience to the increasing impacts of climate change.

Today’s request for the ICJ to clarify the obligations and related legal consequences for all States under international law to ensure the protection of the climate system can provide impetus to global efforts to accelerate climate action, to keep the 1.5-degree temperature goal within reach.

As Pacific Islands Forum Leaders called for in their July 2022 Communique, and reaffirmed in February 2023, the ICJ will provide an advisory opinion on the obligations of all States, including all major emitters past, present and future.

The broad co-sponsorship for this resolution affirms there is a shared responsibility for all States to act on climate change – and a shared commitment to do so.
We strongly welcome the resolution’s priority focus on small island developing States and least developed countries given their particular vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

We recognise that climate change has broad and cross-cutting impacts and requires action across a range of international agreements and initiatives.

In this regard, we note that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) remains the central, indispensable forum for international cooperation on, and commitments to, climate action.

We welcome the resolution’s potential to make a real contribution to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and accelerating ambitious climate action.

Australia is proud to co-sponsor this resolution.

We urge all member States to support a strong, forward-looking, and collective outcome today and in the process ahead.

Thank you.