FIJI NATIONAL STATEMENT

Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Obligations of States in Respect of Climate Change
64th Plenary Meeting, Wednesday 29 March 2023, General Assembly 10:00 am
(3-5 minutes)

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Check Against Delivery

Excellences,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Fiji aligns this statement with the earlier remarks delivered by the distinguished representative of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) and the distinguished representative of Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) member states.

2. At the outset, the delegation of Fiji would like to extend its warm appreciation to the delegation of Vanuatu for their excellent leadership in the facilitation of this resolution that has enabled its adoption in the General Assembly today. Fiji would also like to acknowledge the members of the Core Group many of whom are from outside of the Pacific region but who have nonetheless demonstrated excellent leadership in facilitating the consultations on this resolution and in answering the clarion call of Pacific CSOs and Youths who continue to demand a response and commitment to climate change.
3. We welcome the adoption of this resolution by consensus. This historic adoption will pave the way for the General Assembly to finally seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in respect of climate change – an existential threat and indeed an “unprecedented challenge of civilizational proportions”.

4. We are honored to be a co-sponsor of this resolution and acknowledge the 105 co-sponsors along with those additional co-sponsors that have lent their valuable support to the resolution. Not only have you shown your support to the resolution, but you have demonstrated your commitment in addressing climate change in the interest of present and future generations and their very survival.

5. This day will be etched in history and remembered by generations as we mark a small victory in the battle against climate change. With worsening climatic conditions, frequent category-5 level cyclones, hurricanes and super storms, flash floods, rising sea-level, ocean acidification that is devasting infrastructure, forcing relocation of communities, causing internal displacement and migration and generally impeding the national development, economic prosperity and progress of small island developing states, “climate change is the defining crisis of our time”.

6. We have agreed in the UN last year that as human beings, we have a right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment while recognizing also the interlinkage between human rights and climate change. We must take bold steps that would allow us to reduce if not eliminate our carbon footprint. At the same
time, our development aspirations must be sustainable so that we collectively meet our set goals for 1.5 degrees.

7. Fiji reaffirms commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Fiji Parliament has already passed the Climate Change Act of 2021 that provides the legal basis to support our sustainable development objectives, long-term climate ambition, net-zero emissions target, and commitment to protecting Fiji's environment.

8. Excellences, the earth’s resources are widely acknowledged as global commons. It is now time that we adopt a similar approach towards the planet which is our common home.

7. I thank you.