

**Tuvalu National Statement**  
**International Migration Review Forum General Debate**

20 May 2022

Mr. President, Madame Chair,

Excellencies, Ministers, Distinguished delegates,

One of the smallest and most isolated countries in the world, Tuvalu has a population of approximately 10,645, with remittances, fishing license fees and rent of the “dot tv” Internet extension as its main sources of income. Due to its low-lying geography, Tuvalu is at acute risk from natural disasters, including rising storm surges, cyclones, and tsunamis. Sea level rise and seawater infiltration is causing food and water insecurity in the country.

My country faced immediate impacts of COVID-19 including lockdowns, travel bans and physical distancing measures that have disproportionately affected migrant workers, who have found themselves stranded unable to return to their place of work or their communities of origin. Tropical Cyclone Tino caused extensive damage to Tuvalu’s islands in January 2020, compounding the effects of COVID-19.

Currently, there is both a high internal migration (primarily to the capital Funafuti) and international migration of Tuvaluans in search of employment opportunities and due to the impacts of climate change. Therefore, The Government of Tuvalu has welcomed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration’s (GCM) comprehensive approach to the governance of migration. Following its adaptation, the Government has engaged in various efforts and the national voluntary review has assessed that Tuvalu’s contributes towards GCM Implementation. Given its remoteness and population size, various GCM objectives are not represented in the Tuvalu’s efforts to manage migration, partly because they are not relevant but also due to capacity restrictions. Tuvalu’s main contributions towards GCM implementation include:

- Responding to the issue of displacement due to climate change and sea level rise, Tuvalu launched its **National Climate Change Policy 2020-2030, *Te Vaka Fenua o Tuvalu***, which national priorities set out in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 Te Kete.
- As part of its **adaptation strategies to rising sea levels** and the resultant food and water insecurity, the government is investing in projects to grow food crops in raised gardens and building water storage to catch and store rainwater.
- Tuvalu adopted a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to labour migration through its **National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP)** to assist Tuvaluans to access temporary and permanent employment in overseas markets by matching skills to labour demand while equipping workers with the skills and experience they need.

- Tuvalu implemented **labour mobility agreements with Australia and New Zealand** to enhance employment opportunities for the people and to maximize migration benefits for Tuvalu's sustainable development.
- Tuvalu has a national disaster committee mandated to provide support to all people at times of crises. **The National Disaster Relief Coordination Unit (NDRC)** under the Climate Change and Disaster Policy Unit is responsible for incorporating disaster risk reduction into sector policies and programmes. Tuvalu has established a local financing mechanism called the **Tuvalu Survival Fund (TSF)** to finance recovery and rehabilitation from climate change impacts and natural disasters.
- The Government has a national **Disaster Risk Reduction strategy** with specific provisions for addressing the displacement impacts of disasters and we launched **Tuvalu Agriculture Strategic Marketing Plan (TASMP) 2016-2025** to increase the resilience of the Tuvalu people in relation to climate change by fostering a sustainable domestic trading platform for local food and other local produce, mainly traditional handicrafts.
- The Government is developing a **foreign policy to promote diaspora engagement** in the development of Tuvalu.
- With IOM's support, Tuvalu is also developing its **Labour Migration Reintegration Strategy** building upon the international best practices for reintegration to facilitate the reintegration process.
- **Tuvalu participates in regional consultative processes** – and has close engagements with PIDC, PIFS, IOM, UNODC, UNHCR and other development partners. Notably, Tuvalu is also a part of a global coalition called the **Rising Nations Initiative (RNI)** along with island states to preserve the statehood of countries facing existential threat as result of the climate crisis and protect affected nations, their populations and their rich heritages.

**The primary areas that require policy attention in the future include** – improving data collection, use and management to inform decisions and policies; Greater climate resilience including awareness and communication channels during a crisis; specific national legislation or strategy to manage migration; reducing costs of remittance transfer and improving financial knowledge amongst migrants; and enhanced engagement with diaspora.

Strengthening GCM implementation would **require assistance from the various development partners** in terms of **financing, partnerships, enhanced data collection and management** as well as **capacity building**.

Thank you!