



## GOVERNMENT OF TUVALU

### PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

#### **Prime Minister of Tuvalu calls for Legal Regime to Protect People Displaced by Climate Change**

*Friday 22 April, New York.* Speaking at the opening session of the signing ceremony of the Paris Agreement, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, the Hon Enele Sopoaga called for a UN General Assembly resolution to establish a legal system to protect the rights of people displaced by the impacts of climate change. He referred to studies that indicate that an average of 62,000 people are displaced each day due to the impacts of climate change.

Prime Minister Sopoaga said that the number of people displaced by climate change was a staggering figure and it should ring alarm bells throughout the world.

“The plight of people displaced within countries and across borders must be addressed as a matter of urgency. I would like to seek a UN General Assembly resolution establishing a system of legal protection for people displaced by the impacts of climate change and to ensure they are afforded the necessary support and protection of rights they need and deserve,” said Sopoaga.

In making this call, Prime Minister Sopoaga said that the concern about displaced people is not an indication that the people of Tuvalu want to migrate.

“This is certainly not the case. We want to stay. Our concern about displacement is a humanitarian one,” said Sopoaga.

Prime Minister Sopoaga said that the people of Tuvalu are so committed to the Paris Agreement that parliament had already approved the ratification of the Paris Agreement. Tuvalu is one of fifteen countries that signed the Paris Agreement as well as deposited their instrument of ratification. Most of early ratifiers were Small Island Developing States. Prime Minister Sopoaga expressed his hope that others would

follow and encouraged parliaments around the world to ratify as soon as possible so that the Paris Agreement can promptly enter into force.

In his speech, Prime Minister Sopoaga also sought international support for a Pacific Island Climate Change Insurance Facility to help Pacific Island countries recover from the impacts of climate change disasters.

Prime Minister Sopoaga also recalled a paragraph in the Paris Agreement, which referred to human rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, migrants, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity. He said that the key message from this paragraph was the need to ensure that no one must be left behind and that an inclusive approach is taken in every effort to address climate change.

In closing the Prime Minister said the Paris Agreement must save Tuvalu and save the world.

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