81st ESCAP Commission Session
Statement delivered by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Honorable Panapasi Nelesone

Madame Chair, Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured and privileged to be given the opportunity to address this esteemed gathering at its opening segment on behalf of the Government and people of Tuvalu. I wish to extend my warmest appreciation to the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Thailand for their gracious hospitality and exceptional hosting of this event.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for its efforts in fostering regional cooperation and collaboration in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The unwavering commitment demonstrated in promoting sustainable development, alleviating poverty and protecting the environment stands as a testament to the organization's dedication to creating a better future for all.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Climate change is the single greatest existential threat to Tuvalu. Rising sea levels, storm surges, saltwater intrusion, and unpredictable weather patterns are threatening our lives and livelihoods. Despite these challenges, we are determined to chart our path forward toward a sovereign and sustainable future for Tuvalu. We remain resolute in our commitment to addressing them through proactive measures that prioritise the safety, resilience and well-being of our people and communities.

The theme "Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and Pacific" provides a critical platform for Asia and Pacific Island countries to share experiences and ways to navigate the complexities associated with urbanization and climate change.

In our fight against the adverse impacts of climate change especially climate induced sea level rise, Tuvalu has a flagship project called the Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (TCAP) which is funded by the Green Climate Fund with a total of US$36 million, while $2.9 million is financed from the Government.

Through the TCAP, we have gained invaluable insights into the challenges that confront us. The national scientific data and information gathered have allowed us to create a 3D model that specifically demonstrates the impacts of climate change and sea level rise in Tuvalu. The data is quite alarming; this model reveals that the whole of Tuvalu's land territory is at risk of being engulfed by rising sea levels.

Over the past years, we have experienced a significant increase in population density within our low-lying urban areas. The impacts of climate-induced sea level rise will further exacerbate our challenges and impose considerable pressure across all sectors of the economy. Nonetheless, we recognize that these challenges also present opportunities for growth, innovation and collaboration. But an individual state cannot tackle these issues alone; it requires partnerships at all levels.

Therefore, we appeal to development partners and donors to provide dedicated support for our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific, and the Tuvalu Strategic Plan 2021-2030, also known as Te Kete.

Through regional collective actions, we will be able to strengthen the urbanization dimension and leverage resources to support the implementation of the Tuvalu Strategic Plan 2021-2030, the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. We emphasize the importance of resilience, sustainability and promoting a prosperous Pacific, reflecting our commitment to creating a better future for all.

In conclusion, we look forward to continued collaboration and support from UNESCAP, all partners and member states in accelerating sub-regional, and regional actions that uphold the principles of regional cooperation and solidarity. Together, we can create a more secure, sustainable and resilient future for our people and communities.

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