

## Pacific island states call for UN measures to help countries fight climate change



President of Nauru Marcus Stephen

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The leaders of three Pacific Island countries called on the United Nations today to take a series of measures to help them and other small island nations combat the effects of climate change.

“Climate change threatens to undo all of our recent development gains if the major biggest polluters continue down the path of business as usual,” Nauru’s President Marcus Stephen [told](#) the General Assembly annual general debate.

He stressed that it is essential that the international community recognizes climate change as a peace and security issue, not just an environmental one, and called for further measures to ensure the issue was addressed by the Security Council.

“First, the Secretary-General should appoint a Special Representative on Climate and Security to analyze the projected security impacts of climate change so that the Council and Member States can better understand what lies ahead.

“Second, the Secretary-General should assess the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to the likely security impacts of climate change, so that vulnerable countries can be assured that it is up to the task. These two proposals are the absolute minimum necessary to prepare for the greatest threat to international security of our generation.”

Mr. Stephen also urged Member States to honour their commitments made in existing environmental accords such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Cancún Agreements so that further progress can be made on sustainable development goals.

Micronesian President Emanuel Mori echoed Mr. Stephen’s remarks by [saying](#) that a special category for Small Island Developing Countries (SIDS) is imperative if the UN is to improve the lives of people who live in these states.

He also remarked that climate change as a security threat is not new, but should be taken even more seriously now by Member States.

“We cannot help but notice the persistent failure and reluctance by some countries to address the security aspect of climate change even in the face of overwhelming scientific evidence.

“We believe that those who opposed the debate in the Council and those who doubted the security implications of climate change simply ignored the obvious,” he said.

President of Kiribati Anote Tong [noted](#) that climate change is a threat that his country faces every day and this will be true for other countries in the future.

“In Kiribati, many young people go to sleep each night fearing what will happen to their homes overnight especially during the high tides,” he said.

“Accelerated and continued erosion of our shorelines is destroying settlements and as I speak some communities are relocating elsewhere on the island. I was glad that the Secretary-General was able to understand and feel for himself the sense of threat which our people and those of similarly vulnerable countries experience on a daily basis,” he said, referring to the Secretary-General’s recent visit to Kiribati earlier this month, which marked the first time ever that a Secretary-General visited the country.

[Pacific island nations at UN meeting call on world to fulfil aid commitments](#)