

Thank you to the International Law Commission and the Secretariat for presenting this important oral report and in particular we wish to thank the Study Group for the first issues paper on Sea-Level Rise.

Solomon Islands aligns itself with the statements delivered by Belize on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Tuvalu on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), and Fiji on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). Solomon Islands would like to make the following additional remarks in its national capacity.

COVID-19 has disrupted millions of lives and upended countless industries. As the world responds to and rebuilds from this unprecedented pandemic, we must not lose sight of climate change and sea-level rise. These issues continue to have detrimental effects on all of us, which are only exacerbated by COVID-19.

The issue of sea-level rise is especially important to Solomon Islands. Our oceans are deeply interconnected with the lives and culture of our people. Our economy and continued sustainable development depend

initiatives as the international community works towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As a large ocean State, Solomon Islands is specially affected by sea-level rise and climate change. Solomon Islands is made up of nearly 1000 islands, which are mostly low-lying islands, atolls, and reefs that are highly vulnerable to rising sea levels. Like other SIDS, we are continuing to lose islands, and our people continue to be displaced. Over half of our population lives within just 1 km of the coast and we have already lost 5 islands to sea level rise. For Solomon Islands, sea-level rise is an existential crisis.

Madame Chair, Solomon Islands believes the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) does not adequately consider rapidly rising sea levels. This ambiguity was underscored in the Study Group's issues paper. Customs developed outside of the context of climate change do not help in understanding the obligations of UNCLOS. Solomon Islands agrees with AOSIS, that "more recent State practice, made in the context of climate change and consistently rising sea levels, should be most relevant to the consideration of the Study Group."

My delegation would like to reaffirm its opinion that maritime boundaries and archipelagic

UNCLOS Article 76 paragraph 8. Consistent with international law and regional practice, Solomon Islands has deposited geographic coordinates for nearly all of its maritime zones with DOALOS. These zones are fixed and are not to be altered, despite sea-level rise.

Madame Chair, in conclusion, Solomon Islands supports the continued work of the ILC Working Group and reaffirms the role of the UN in addressing the global effects of climate change. As indicated by the report, sea-level rise is an important issue affecting the entire international community. Solomon Islands looks forward to working together in the Sixth Committee to establish equitable and certain international legal norms for maritime baselines.

I thank you.