



PERMANENT MISSION OF ROMANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



The Permanent Missions of New Zealand, Peru, Portugal, Romania and Turkey, with the sponsorship of the Alliance of Small Island States, the Pacific Island Forum and the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein, cordially invite you to a panel discussion on:

“Sea Level Rise and Implications for International Law”

Tuesday 29 October, 1.15-2.45pm, Conference Room 6

Moderator: Dr. Penelope Ridings, New Zealand

Panellists:

- H.E. Ms Lois M. Young, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations and Chair of AOSIS
- Bogdan Aurescu, Patricia Galvão Teles, Nilüfer Oral, and Juan José Ruda Santolaria (International Law Commission members) – joint presentation on the ILC’s decision to include the topic of “sea-level rise in relation to international law” in its Programme of Work: overview of the decision, methodology of work, calendar and input from States
- H.E. Mr Samuelu Laloni, Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the United Nations and Chair of PIF

Concept

Sea-level rise as a result of climate change is accelerating around the world. The recent report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on Ocean and the Cryosphere concludes it is rising at faster rates than previously predicted and could reach 1.1 meters by 2100. Small Island States, particularly low lying ones, are at the front lines of experiencing the adverse impacts of sea level rise and the profound consequences this brings for people and ecosystems. While low lying islands are already feeling the impacts of sea-level rise, in the coming years more than 70 States are likely to be directly impacted by sea-level rise, including continental States with coastal areas. Moreover, the IPCC special report shows that the increasing rate of sea level is closely linked with what is happening also in mountain regions, thus making this a truly global problem.

While sea-level rise poses significant development, economic and environmental challenges, the phenomenon also raises complex questions in international law, such as:

- What are the legal implications of sea-level rise upon baselines and therefore on the limits of the maritime zones which are measured from the baselines, as well as upon the maritime delimitations?
- What are the legal implications of sea-level rise on the status of islands including issues related to artificial islands, reclamation or island fortification activities under international law as a response/adaptive measures to sea-level rise?
- What are the consequences for Statehood under international law should a territory of a State disappear? Or if an island becomes uninhabitable due to salinization?
- What protection do persons directly affected by sea-level rise enjoy under international law?

The International Law Commission has, therefore, recently decided to include “sea-level rise in relation to international law” in its current Programme of Work.

Join us for a panel discussion which will provide an opportunity for discussing the tangible impacts of sea level rise, as well as an occasion for Member States to engage with ILC members on the legal questions this phenomenon raises.

Light lunch will be served