## oral statement

Faaolo Utumapu-Utailesolo

Ladies and gentlemen I am honoured to deliver an oral statement on behalf of children and young persons with disabilities in the Pacific Island countries.

I am Faaolo Utumapu-Utailesolo, the Disability Rights Fund Program Officer for the Pacific Island countries, a region that is very prone to disaster, but where persons with disabilities are often excluded and marginalised. This oral statement is to share the findings of two consultations virtual and in-person with children and young Persons with disabilities across 7 countries of the Pacific island region and inputs from 11 OPDS from 7 countries. This is the first time that children and young people from the Pacific presented a joined submission with the Disability rights fund on the CRPD. rticle

The Pacific Islands are one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change. Impacts include rising sea levels, increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters, ocean acidification, impacts on livelihoods and economies, and changes in patterns of vector borne disease. These adverse effects significantly impact the human rights of children and adults with disabilities, who are disproportionately at risk of harm, neglect, violence, and abuse. The Pacific Island countries consist of low-lying islands and atols that are threatened to submerged by rising sealevels, causing villages and communities to relocate hence losign their homes and livelihoods.

## Concerns of children and young persons with disabilities

Children and young persons share in the consultation that the barriers they face are multiplied by the general assumption that whatever is planned for the community is good enough for persons with disabilities.

Children with disabilities in the Pacific are concern that climate change and the impacts of natural disaster will exacerbate the serious impacts on the following

* health
* food security
* Contamination of clean water sources
* Loss of livelihood and income
* The increase risks of gender-based violence and abuse, the increase of unplanned pregnancy and exposure to STIS when children and young persons with disabilities are asked to relocate due to climate change.
* Climate change information are not available in easy to read child friendly formats or in altnerative native languages, including sign language;making it hard to follow for those who’s mother tongue was another language

As such children and young persons with disabilities from the Pacific wish to make the following statement

1. Call on state parties to Ensure that children and young persons with disabilities are engaged and consulted on national, local level and community initiatives on climate change and DRR related initiatives to address risks.
2. Call on all parties to Provide information on climate change in child friendly, easy read formats, including visual formats, and alternative languages including native and sign language to address the ongoing exclusion of children with disabilities from receiving crucial information to enhance their participation and action
3. Call on all parties to ensure that There needs to be resources put in place to provide reasonable accommodations for children and young people with diverse disabilities to participate fully and effectively in consultations on climate change related risks.
4. Call on governments to conduct active outreach and consultations with children and young people with disabilities on climate change and the environment, including through collaborations and partnerships with organisations of persons with disabilities, providing accessible venues, transportation, communications, information and the provision of reasonable accommodation to ensure their participation on an equal basis with other children and young people.
5. Strengthen data and research to better track the impacts of climate related risks on children and young persons with disabilities
6. ensure targeted action by all actors through the adoption of impact assessments, indicators and targets inclusive of children and young people with disabilities.

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