



Credit: Josh Orter/Aerographimages.com/Rising Nations Initiative Heritage Project

Call to Action: Rising sea levels – make the future of the Pacific Islands a core priority for Germany’s climate foreign policy

In April 2023, the World Meteorological Organization found that the rate of global average sea level rise doubled in the last ten years. Rising sea levels and the consequences of the climate crisis are creating an increasingly uncertain future for people in many parts of the world. In the Pacific, the atoll island countries of Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands will become uninhabitable before being submerged by rising seawater. This represents an existential question for the political, economic, cultural and social fabric of whole countries.

The international community needs to act NOW – spearheaded by champions like Germany willing to address the climate crisis and all its bitter consequences. In her opening speech at the fourteenth Petersberg Climate Dialogue on May 2, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock stressed the existential threats faced by some small island developing states. On the occasion of Tuvalu’s representatives’ visit to Germany the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Global Centre for Climate Mobility and the Rising Nations Initiative, urgently encourage Germany to exercise global leadership, including by making the future of the Pacific atoll island countries a core issue within its climate foreign policy.



**Robert Bosch
Stiftung**



**Global Centre for
Climate Mobility**

This will be the first time in history that the climate crisis – or more accurately, the collective inaction of many nations to prevent this crisis – will make several sovereign countries uninhabitable. For Tuvalu, a Pacific atoll island nation sitting halfway between Hawaii and Australia, the prospect of uninhabitability will most likely take place by mid-century. Kiribati and the Marshall Islands are facing similar eminent threat. What is particularly tragic: Pacific island developing states are not responsible for the climate catastrophe we are facing – together, they contribute less than 0.03 % of global carbon emissions.

We thus urge the German government to consider the following actions:

1. Foreign Cultural Policy integrated with Climate:

Germany's foreign cultural policy can be integrated with its climate change policy to protect the cultural heritage of Pacific small island developing states like Tuvalu. This can be achieved by strengthening support for efforts to preserve and protect the cultural heritage of threatened countries, as well as advocating for global recognition of the universal value of their culture, customs and heritage, including at UNESCO and other relevant international forums.

2. Protect sovereignty and statehood:

Germany can work to support efforts to protect the sovereignty, statehood and rights of threatened Pacific small island countries like Tuvalu, recognizing the unprecedented challenges resulting from sea level rise. This could involve supporting efforts to clarify legal questions within existing international legal forums, advocating for international recognition of Tuvalu and other Pacific atoll island countries' unique situation, as well as supporting projects that ensure continuity of government, such as digital infrastructure and meaningful connectivity.

3. Investing in adaptation and addressing loss and damage:

Germany can further invest in adaptation efforts in Pacific small islands developing states to protect livelihoods and economic activity. Germany can also invest in loss and damage efforts, such as supporting disaster risk reduction programs and providing financial assistance for those affected by climate change-related disasters.

4. Empower Pacific communities in responding to the unprecedented challenge:

The people of Pacific atoll island countries need urgent international support in addressing their uncertain future. We must invest in the resilience, human dignity, and agency of affected communities to adapt to the unprecedented challenges of the climate crisis, including if and when they choose to relocate in dignity and sovereignty. Germany can press for people-centered climate action that is locally-anchored and community-led.

With prioritization of these policy areas, Germany can help protect the statehood, sovereignty, rights and cultural heritage of Pacific small island developing countries like Tuvalu, while also pressing forward climate justice and addressing the impacts of climate change. These efforts will be key in supporting affected communities through their unprecedented adaptation journey.

“Finding the right solution will require statesmanship and empathy, beginning with an acknowledgement that a situation globally caused must also have a globally just and equitable solution.”

- Kausea Natano, Prime Minister of Tuvalu

Germany’s leadership in the international system is rooted in its commitment to a rules-based order and being a valued-based champion in international politics. Global politics and international cooperation are about our shared responsibility to create a better world for all. By supporting small island developing states like Tuvalu who face an existential threat, Germany will set an example for other countries as well as Europe to follow, in the spirit of international cooperation coupled with climate justice and climate action.

As we face today’s crisis of cooperation in multilateralism, supporting the Pacific small island developing states and Tuvalu presents an opportunity for Germany to bridge the gap, reaffirming its commitment to its values and the rules-based international order. Our actions today can help shape the moral compass of world politics for generations to come.

Handwritten signature of Ambassador Samuelu Laloni.

Ambassador Samuelu Laloni,
Tuvalu Special Envoy, Rising Nations Initiative

Handwritten signature of Dr. Bernhard Straub.

Dr. Bernhard Straub,
CEO Robert Bosch Stiftung

Handwritten signature of Grace Malie.

Grace Malie,
Rising Nations Initiative Youth Delegate

Handwritten signature of Kamal Amakrane.

Kamal Amakrane,
Director of the UN Global Centre for Climate
Mobility and Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow
at the Robert Bosch Academy

About the Rising Nations Initiative

The Rising Nations Initiative, launched by Heads of states in September 2022, is aimed at pressing forward efforts to protect the statehood of Pacific Atoll countries, preserving their sovereignty, and safeguarding the rights and heritage of affected populations amid the climate crisis and the existential threat that this poses. The RNI is a member states-led initiative, guided by a core group of champions, including all Pacific atoll island countries. It is based around three complementary drivers of action: knowledge, partnerships, and advocacy.

www.climatemobility.org/rising-nations-initiative

About the Global Centre for Climate Mobility

The Global Centre for Climate Mobility (GCCM) is a global partnership pushed forward by a group of champion countries and enabled by the United Nations System, the World Bank, and regional organizations to address climate-forced migration and displacement in the world's most climate vulnerable regions. GCCM efforts are supported by a multi-stakeholder coalition, including philanthropy, civil society organization and academic institutions.

www.climatemobility.org

About the Robert Bosch Stiftung

The Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH is one of Europe's largest foundations associated with a private company. It works in the areas of health, education, and global issues. With its charitable activities, it contributes to the development of viable solutions to social challenges. For this purpose, the Foundation implements its own projects, enters into alliances with partners, and supports third-party initiatives. Since it was established in 1964, the Robert Bosch Stiftung has invested over 2 billion euros in charitable work.

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