

Implications of Climate Change on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security

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Statement by Ambassador Taalas Permanent Representative to Finland

Mr. Taalas (Finland): Finland subscribes to the European Union statement. I would like to make just a few additional points from our national perspective. Finland welcomes this debate. In the light of this debate, of exchanges in many other forums, and of the Secretary-General's 2009 report (A/64/350), it is clear that climate change will have significant security implications. The themes highlighted in the concept note (S/2011/408, annex) and in this debate, including rises in sea levels and food security, are directly linked to international peace and security.

Only 20 years ago, it did not seem imaginable that small island nations could be submerged due to sea-level rise. It sounded like science-fiction. Today, that prospect is all too real. Climate change will have an adverse effect on food production and freshwater resources. That impact will be worse in areas already under environmental stress, which could lead to population movements and political unrest. While the impact of climate change varies from region to region, the small island developing States are most at risk. They are not the cause of climate change, but they may very well become its first victims unless remedial action is taken. They must be our priority.

Finland is actively partnering with many small island developing States in building their capacity to act internationally and adapt locally. As an example, Finland supports the capacity development of the Alliance of Small Island States and the Pacific small island developing States, and has meteorological cooperation projects in the Pacific and Caribbean regions. Action and ownership at the local level are crucial to slowing climate change and mitigating its effects. Women have a key role, as they are often the most powerful agents for change. That is why Finland has for years supported the Global Gender and Climate Alliance and the participation of women representatives in climate change negotiations.

Finland welcomes the discussions on climate change within the United Nations and believes that the Security Council and other United Nations organs can and should contribute to this, within their respective competences. The Security Council should, given its pre-eminent role in maintaining international peace and security, keep an eye on the emerging security implications of climate change. If elected to the Security Council next year, Finland will contribute actively to any such assessment and action.