Thank you Mr Chair, Foreign Minister deBrum, distinguished panellists.

Australia welcomes this important discussion on the role of climate change as a threat multiplier for global security, and we are pleased to see the growing recognition of this issue.

As the panellists and speakers before me have illustrated, climate change is no longer solely an environmental issue, but is accepted to have socio-economic impacts that can affect stability and security.

Amid further climate variability, there will also be increasing and competing pressures on land, water, energy and fishery resources.

Without intervention, the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation could erode development gains, undermine economic growth and compound human security challenges.

In light of these challenges, we need to examine how the international architecture – both within the UN system and beyond it – can most effectively respond.
Global and national efforts to reduce emissions must be at the centre of our approach. That is why Australia is committed to working with others to deliver a strong and effective new global climate agreement through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December.

But it will be equally important to assist the most vulnerable to manage and adapt to the already unavoidable impacts of climate change.

In this regard, building disaster response capacities, and strengthening resilience within countries, will be critical. In the Pacific, Australia is working with our small island neighbours to climate-proof new investments and ensure their development impacts are lasting.

Other parts of the UN system must complement these global and national efforts, and assist us to better understand and address the security implications of climate change. On this, Australia has spoken before about the need for closer cooperation between the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the UN Environment Programme.

My Pacific Island colleagues – ably represented by Papua New Guinea Ambassador Robert Aisi, to whom I would also like to pay tribute in what is fittingly his last intervention at the UN – also referred to the 2011 UN Security Council Presidential Statement, which provided a mandate for information on the possible security implications of climate change to be included in reporting to the Council.

More detailed and regular reporting will be valuable in deepening our understanding of how climate change can increase the risk of conflict, and in developing holistic peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategies.

Outside of the UN, the Nansen Initiative provides the opportunity to develop a more globally coherent approach to the protection of people displaced by natural disasters.

Pacific Island Leaders have a long-standing position on this issue. In the 2008 Niue Declaration on Climate Change, we affirmed that our first priority must be to assist affected communities to continue to live in their own countries, where this is possible.

As environmental pressures continue to build, we will need to be ready with options that are sensitive to the needs of the affected communities.

Mr Chair

The relationship between security and climate change is complex to understand, and complex to address. But this cannot be an excuse for inaction.

We have heard today and yesterday the call of the world’s most vulnerable.

It is incumbent upon us, as a global community, to respond.

Thank you Mr Chair.