

Disaster in Tuvalu

Negotiation instructions for the US Secretary of State

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Enclosed an memo outlining your priorities to keep in mind for the upcoming ministerial meeting. This information is for your eyes only.

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Staff Memo

From: Office of the State Department

To: United States Secretary of State

Date: October 31, 2022

Re: Information for pre-meeting btw. yourself, the Special Climate Envoy, the Treasury Secretary, and the Chief of Staff of the President

As requested, below some preparatory information for your upcoming meeting.

Strategic considerations:

1. **Strengthen US influence in the Pacific region: We recommend using this instance to showcase US leadership and strengthen ties to a key diplomatic ally.**

Negotiations around the disaster response to the cyclone could be tense, given its direct tie to the controversial issue on L&D and the potential involvement of China in operating critical infrastructure in Tuvalu. Any outcome that ensures maintaining cordial relations between the US and Tuvalu whilst limiting Chinese involvement is a win for the US.

2. **Linkage to COP: To the degree possible, we recommend handling negotiations regarding this cyclone separately from upcoming COP discussions on L&D.**

We want to avoid precedents on having disaster relief funds (such as humanitarian aid) be framed as funds for climate-related losses and damages. Whilst we are open to discuss increased financing or new vehicles for climate related impacts at the upcoming COP, there are important nuances to ensure that such vehicles don't imply a general liability for the US. A premature acceptance of particular disaster funding as climate-related could set precedents for the US to assume general responsibility and provide humanitarian funding as part of its climate commitments. In particular, any implication of the US having a direct responsibility for this disaster must be avoided.

Considerations for specific agenda items:

Your staff has shared an agenda of discussion items. Below our recommended positions for the key discussion items.

1) Funding Amount

Recommendations:

We have **no strong preference** on the exact amount of overall funding.

We recommend avoiding any funding arrangements that include China (unless any such agreement is coupled with a public demand for China to provide more funds for international climate vehicles).

China has stepped forward to provide financial support. In principle, we welcome stronger financial leadership from China, however, the specific funding proposals are a source for concern. China offered to rebuild critical infrastructure (including Tuvalu's port) in exchange for operating rights and has offered expensive satellite technology for disaster monitoring. We have concerns that the technology is capable of collecting sensitive data in the Pacific region and that the operating rights will grant undue control over the transfer of goods into the Pacific. If involving China in the funding package becomes necessary



through the course of the negotiations, doing so should be coupled with a public demand for China to contribute more to international climate related funds (such as the GCF; see below).

2) Funding Vehicles

Recommendations:

Our agency **has no strong preference** over the categories of funding.

3) Public Communication of the Results

Recommendations:

Secure a joint press statement whilst avoiding the topic of L&D in public communications. This is a high-priority issue area for the State Department. To the extent possible, we recommend minimizing attention on L&D leading up to COP27 while also framing the US as a global leader in the international climate space.

Potentially include a call for China and India to contribute more to climate related funding. Should an agreement to include public communication regarding L&D be necessary, we believe that a useful commitment from Tuvalu could be to support the long-standing US demand for China and other large emitters to contribute more funding to international climate funding arrangements.

4) Potential Discussion Item 4: COP27 (Strictly Confidential)

Recommendations:

We recommend keeping your cards as open as possible and, to the extent possible, avoid any public or private commitments with regards to COP27. It is unclear how this discussion will unfold, if at all. Should Tuvalu link these upcoming discussions to negotiations about the official COP27 agenda, we recommend not agreeing to support L&D as an agenda item at COP27. If such a commitment becomes necessary through the course of the negotiations, any agreement should be predicated on a commitment from Tuvalu that it will not push for language that might subject the US to legal financial obligations. Any agreement on US support for the COP27 agenda or regarding openness to future negotiations about financial support should be private and not be communicated publicly.