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Statement by

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Mister [Vice]President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and a pleasure for me to address you at this important conference. At the outset, let me commend Fiji in its role as the first small-island developing country to preside over a COP, CMP and CMA. Bula!

COP 23 marks a critical milestone in the international climate change negotiations. Two years ago, history was made when we – the global community – adopted the Paris Agreement.

The Agreement obliges all of us to a pathway towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions and a climate-resilient development. This pathway requires a global energy transition with measures undertaken at all levels – regional, national and global.

Paris sends the clear message that the future belongs to renewable energy. Fossil fuels are on the way out! And nuclear energy is not at all an option!

Austria is well known as a country strongly opposing nuclear power. And indeed, among the Austrian population and across all political parties there is wide-spread consensus that nuclear power is too risky as energy technology and that the use of nuclear power burdens future generations irresponsibly with nuclear waste.

Austria does not consider nuclear power as compatible with the concept of sustainable development! In our view, reliance on nuclear power is neither a viable nor a cost efficient option to combat the greenhouse effect, either.

I am personally convinced that a European Energy Union is feasible without nuclear power. However, a number of conditions have to be met. A low carbon policy without nuclear power is not only possible, but it also brings economic benefits and above all it is more environmentally friendly and more sustainable. Don't nuke the climate!

Mister [Vice]President,

Austria is fully committed to an energy transition towards renewables as part of the implementation of our pre- and post-2020 commitments, including the European Union's targets under the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and our NDC under the Paris Agreement. We are already very close to meeting our 2020 target of a 34% share of renewables in final energy consumption. We are also active in the area of adaptation to climate change, working with Austrian regions to strengthen resilience.

This year we are focusing in particular on rural areas and vulnerable regions in Austria. As part of a boost for rural areas, we are helping regions in becoming climate and energy role models. We are supporting local businesses, local governments, schools and individuals in areas including green start-ups, energy-efficient housing and science-based local adaptation activities. I'm happy to share our very positive experiences with

all of you. In addition, Austria is focusing on climate change and climate action as a key element in our Presidency of the Alpine Convention.

This is only a small sample of the numerous activities we are doing to further implement and bring to life our commitments. And I want to stress that all of this is already happening now as part of our pre-2020 action.

Mister [Vice]President,

After highlighting national and sub-national activities let me return to the international negotiations and the task at hand for this conference. COP 23 is a crucial milestone on the way to finalizing a comprehensive package of implementation guidelines for the Paris Agreement by the end of next year.

Austria will preside over the European Union in the second half of next year. I can assure you that Austria will do its utmost in this role to facilitate the adoption of the Paris Work Programme at COP 24, together with the Polish COP Presidency.

So we need to leave Bonn with a solid textual foundation for the decisions on the Paris implementation, including a roadmap for further work next year and a design for the Talanoa Dialogue that will enable us all to take stock of our commitments.

Let us work together to achieve these important outcomes. Let us all work together in a spirit of trust, mutual respect and compromise.

Let us, above all, make COP 23 the success it deserves to be!

Vinaka vakalevu. Thank you.