

Statement by Mr. Mahe 'Uli'uli Tupouniua,
Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga at the High-Level Segment of the
United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP17 and CMP7)
Durban, South Africa; 8 December, 2011

Madam President,
Your Excellencies and Heads of Delegation,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour, on behalf of the Government and People of the Kingdom of Tonga, to join distinguished delegates who have spoken before me to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election to the chair of the COP17 and CMP7. My delegation also conveys its appreciation to the Government and People of South Africa for the warm hospitality and efficient conduct of this important Conference, together with the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC and the Secretariat. Indeed, we assure you of our full support and cooperation as we look forward to a concrete and successful outcome tomorrow, here in Durban.

I have the further honour to align my delegation with the statements delivered by Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and Nauru on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS).

Madam President,

In that regard, my delegation wishes to share a couple of actions taken by Tonga on their efforts to combat climate change.

The Kingdom of Tonga has produced a Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management; established a Parliamentary Standing Committee for Environment and Climate Change to fast track outstanding issues and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change holds quarterly national climate change roundtables with resident donors and relevant stakeholders.

Tonga has also developed the Tongan Energy Road Map (TERM) 2010-2020 to promote emission reductions with a Government mandated target for 50% electricity generation through renewable technology by 2013.

Madam President,

My delegation shares this to highlight the efforts Tonga is taking as a small island developing state, to address climate change and ensure its very survival now and for many more generations to come in the far future. We also join all small island states in the call for a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol with an enhanced set of rules.

We all prioritize the need for a new, but complementary, legally binding Protocol that has binding mitigation commitments for non-Kyoto Parties and mitigation actions for developing nations, as well as the conclusion of all other elements of the Bali Action Plan. We also want to ensure that we complete the work required on the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Committee, and programme on loss and damage.

While we observe the fair progress on the framework to address adaptation issues related to the adverse effects of Climate Change, we note that there appears to be slow progress on action to actually address Climate Change itself, which remains the ultimate objective of this Convention.

Madam President,

It is high time to act; particularly as we know there is no technical or economic reason why we are not able to do so. To reiterate the words of colleagues, a successful outcome is guaranteed as long as we have the collective political will.

Thank you.