

Statement by Hon. Patrick Pruaitch
Minister for Forests and Climate Change of Papua New Guinea
Speaking on behalf of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations

At the High-level segment of Doha Climate Change Conference (COP18-
CMP8)

Doha, Qatar

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Mr. President,

Papua New Guinea has the honour to speak on behalf of the 52 countries of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, of which the following have endorsed this statement: Bangladesh, Belize, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Kenya, Laos PDR, Liberia, Nigeria, Panama, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Togo, Uganda and Vietnam.

First of all allow me to congratulate Your Excellency Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah on your election as the President of COP 18 and CMP 8. We are confident that under your capable and wise leadership we will achieve an effective outcome at the conclusion of this meeting.

Let me also assure you that our Coalition is ready and determined to support and work closely under your guidance during your presidency.

Mr. President,

Climate change is accelerating. The warming climate is creating more frequent and unpredictable threats to our planet and our lives. We are all affected, poor and rich, north and south, developed and developing.

Extreme events are now occurring with disturbing frequency becoming in all parts of the world with small island states suffering the most. People in these countries face the effects of climate change every day.

Mr. President,

Forests must be a key part of the solution. Our forests can and must improve the quality of life of our people while they contribute to the stabilization of our global climate. The fight against deforestation and forest degradation is a reality in rainforest nations. We are committed to contribute to collectively slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss.

Mr. President,

Since 2005 our Coalition has assumed a leading role in the global fight against climate change. Thanks to work of our participants and like-minded countries, reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks is a fundamental element of the global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and a milestone of the Bali Action Plan.

Mr. President,

Before we leave Doha, there are two fundamental milestones we must achieve:

1. First, Doha must start a process under SBI to develop a governance mechanism, such as a REDD+ Committee. We are open to work with all Parties to define the functions and roles to make this efficient and effective.
2. Second, Doha must launch a work-program under the COP around the financing for all REDD+ actions, including public and private, market and non-market.

With these two steps, the establishment of the REDD+ Committee and a Work Program on REDD+ Finance, we can fulfill the Bali Action Plan and agree to closure of the AWG-LCA.

Of course, the outcomes in Copenhagen, Cancun and Durban are three key steps necessary for the launch of REDD+ implementation.

In Doha, we regret that SBSTA did not conclude the discussion on the two missing pieces: modalities for national forest monitoring systems and measuring, reporting and verifying.

Mr. President,

Our Coalition is determined to finalize all remaining issues that would allow the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol to start smoothly on 1 January 2013. We call for the stringent standards for environmental integrity and more ambition under the Kyoto Protocol. To this aim Annex B Parties should commit to deeper greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments and REDD+ can offer a significant contribution to the closure of the ambition gap.

Mr. President,

REDD+ actions, but only under a national reference level and National MRV systems to safeguard environmental integrity, must contribute to raise the level of ambition of developed country Parties both under the Kyoto Protocol and the new legally binding agreement to be crafted by 2015 under the Durban Platform. REDD+ efforts should be fully covered by the new agreement and early and pilot mitigation actions should be recognized by the UNFCCC. Their impact on the global reduction of greenhouse gas emissions should be formally quantified.

Mr. President,

Coastal marine ecosystems such as mangroves, tidal salt marshes and seagrass meadows offer unlimited potential both in terms of adaptation and mitigation to climate change. Therefore, we enthusiastically endorse the agreement reached in Doha to convene a workshop on this issue by the end of next year. Let me also congratulate Honduras, a participant of the Coalition, who has kindly offered to host this important event.

Mr. President,

Please now allow me to take a few moments to convey how Papua New Guinea is taking the lead in the fight against climate change. Since 2005, our vision has remained clear and our efforts have intensified.

Papua New Guinea realized early on that political will must support any national climate action plan. Precisely, for this reason the Parliament of PNG established the Office of Climate Change and Development within its Ministry of Forests and Climate Change.

Mr. President,

The Office of Climate Change and Development has achieved much in under three years. It has established multi-stakeholder technical working groups on mitigation, adaptation, REDD+ and national consultation.

Papua New Guinea has maintained its position as one of the leaders of the REDD+ issue. Extensive stakeholder consultations and surveys have lead to the approval of more than 12 REDD+ initiatives. Two of these projects are now accredited and have advanced to the stage where Development Options Studies are being undertaken. These REDD+ initiatives are the source of knowledge and technology sharing necessary to scale up REDD+ regionally, nationally and internationally.

Mr. President, allow me to remind you that Papua New Guinea has instituted its REDD+ program with the highest degree of and without a whisper of corruption. In this respect, PNG's REDD+ initiative is a model of sustainable management.

Mr. President,

On a larger scale, Papua New Guinea has instituted a Climate Compatible Development Plan, which with extensive stakeholder participation, will change the lives of 3 million people most vulnerable to climate change. This is a visionary strategy extending to the year 2030.

Mr. President,

Through these efforts, Papua New Guinea is the only country where its climate refugees have been able to return home to stable productive lives. But this is not a sustainable scenario.

Papua New Guinea has worked hard to achieve these outcomes but it has had to rely on its own resources. PNG has assumed responsibility and has begun an unilateral battle against climate change. The problem, however, is growing and we desparately need international climate financing to meet the growing burden. It is time for all developed countries to assume the same responsibility that PNG and other developing countries have taken and provide the necessary support for the good of all mankind.

Mr. President,

Our expectation for Doha is for rich nations, with the capability to lead, to assist those countries that have been forced to make sacrifices to survive. We will continue to pilot REDD+ and Climate Compatible Development but my country needs support from all capable Parties, including those who have not met their obligations under the Kyoto Protocol. Papua New Guinea will no longer tolerate being used as guinea pigs for rich nations that apply a double standard with respect to global efforts to fight climate change.

Finally Mr. President,

We can't wait any longer. Climate change is real and REDD+ must be a fundamental element of the solution – now, before 2020 and post-2020. This is why we urge all Parties to continue working under your guidance, in the spirit of compromise and cooperation, with the view to finalize a successful outcome in Doha.

I thank you Mr. President.