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**Statement by Hon. Mr. Ronald Asik  
Vice Minister for Forests and Climate Change of Papua New Guinea**

**At the High-level segment of the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP17) to  
the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
Durban, South Africa  
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Mr President,

First of all, allow me to commend the government and the people of South Africa for their warm hospitality and welcome to this great nation and beautiful city.

On the outset, let me assure you that Papua New Guinea is ready and determined to support and work closely with you during your presidency.

Mr President,

Climate change is a reality, and it is a threat to our planet and can only be managed with a clear and decisive response from all governments around the world.

Climate change affects the lives of everybody; it affects economic development, local communities, rich and poor countries and does not discriminate.

Small Island states suffer the most adverse effects of climate change. Our population is confronted on a daily basis with the disasters caused by global warming.

The effects of global warming are evident with floods, cyclones, landslides, droughts, high-seas and even tsunamis.  
Papua New Guinea is home to the world's first climate refugees, which are in the process of being relocated from their sinking islands.'

Mr President,

Forests contribute substantially to the economic and sustainable life of the planet and helps holds in balance such natural disasters.

Forests are one of the key answers to combat climate change. Papua New Guinea is determined to contribute to collectively slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss, in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support to developing country Parties and in accordance with national circumstances, consistent with the ultimate objective of the Convention.

Mr President,

Papua New Guinea has already assumed its part in this global fight. 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 part of our effort as the meetings of Bali, Copenhagen and Cancun have shown.

Mr President,

Papua New Guinea is requesting a global solution on access to the global carbon markets for ecosystem services such as REDD+, the most innovative tool for cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases and the promotion of sustainable development in rainforest nations, subject to full MRV and respecting for safeguards.

Mr President,

Here in Durban we must agree on financing options for the full implementation of REDD+ results-based actions as mandated by the Cancun agreements and we share the views of many other Parties that financial resources for REDD+ should come from fund based sources (for phases 1 and 2) and from a flexible combination of fund based and market based sources (for phase 3).

A solution must be found in the context of the AWG-LCA where we advocate for the adoption of a legally-binding agreement, even a new Protocol, as soon as possible so that all Parties can contribute to the fight against global warming in accordance with their responsibilities and capabilities.

Mr President,

We firmly believe in the second commitment of the Kyoto Protocol, the only and unique concrete response to climate change so far.

A second commitment period based on strong greenhouse gas emissions reduction commitments necessary to fill the gap signaled by recent science.

A second commitment period under a renewed and strengthened Kyoto Protocol where inclusion of a voluntary REDD+ mechanism for results based actions raises the general level of ambition.

New rules which should also improve the existing LULUCF system by the introduction of accurate and comprehensive land based accounting as well as limits on the carryover of AAUs.

Mr President,

We highlight the importance of coastal marine ecosystems such as mangroves, tidal salt marshes and sea grass meadows to adaptation and mitigation to climate change and we are looking forward to continue our work on this item under the SBSTA.

Finally Mr President,

Papua New Guinea is willing to show leadership. We are not here to blame those for history past, rather, we are here to partner for a sustainable future.

Therefore, we have established an Office of Climate Change and Development, we have developed a draft climate compatible development plan with contemplated 50 percent reductions based on 2010 levels by 2030, subject to predictable, adequate and sustained financial support that also undergoes MRV as will our actions.

We have progressed with the implementation of our climate compatible development plan. Our newly built Coastal Early Warning System has successfully been tested during the Fukushima tsunami earlier this year.

We are in the process of planting 1 million additional mangroves to protect our coast line. We are also working on a new Climate Change Act to be considered by Parliament as we speak.

The government has also approved the Office of Climate Change to operate as an authority, and I also take this opportunity to announce the government's commitment to launch new demonstration projects, such as the April Salome pilot project consistent with the agreed UNFCCC readiness and Demonstration policies and safeguards.

Mr President,

This pilot project which also happens to be in my electorate will be launched early next year by which time all the processes for REDD projects will be in place and would set the phase for the country's commitment in the reduction of carbon loss.

These are decisions and commitments made to show the government's desire to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Time is short. The stakes are high, life and death for millions resulting from climate change related incidents is real.

Therefore, Mr President, Papua New Guinea urges all Parties to continue working under your guidance with the spirit of compromise and cooperation with the view to finalize a successful outcome in Durban.

I once again thank you Mr President and your wonderful people of Durban for the hospitality during our stay.

Thankyou.