



TUVALU

**Statement
Presented by
PRIME MINISTER**

Honourable Enele Sosene Sopoaga

**at the 20th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on
Climate Change**

December 2014, Lima, Peru

CHECK AGAINST DELIVE

Honourable President of COP20

Leaders,

Ministers,

Honourable Secretary General,

Madam Executive Secretary

Excellencies,

Colleagues

It is a pleasure to speak after President Morales. We co-chaired a roundtable on vulnerable countries at the Climate Change Summit convened by the Secretary General of the UN in September this year. It is good to see him again.

At the outset I would like to thank the people of Peru for their warm hospitality. Tuvalu has an interesting and rather tragic historical connection with Peru. There are Tuvaluans buried here on this land and we pay our respects to our ancestors who were brought here against their will.

I am here at this important meeting as the highest representative of the people of Tuvalu. I carry a huge burden and responsibility. I carry their hopes that there will be a future for Tuvalu. This is an enormous burden to carry. It keeps me awake at night. No national leader in the history of humanity has ever faced this question. Will we survive or will we disappear under the sea? I ask you all to think what it is like to be in my shoes. Stop and pause for a moment.

If you were faced with the threat of the disappearance of your nation, what would you do? I ask you to pause and ask yourself, what would you do?

Climate change is the single greatest challenge facing my country. It is threatening the livelihood, security and wellbeing of all Tuvaluans. There are others that also share this burden. The low lying coral atoll nations of Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and the Maldives, are also on the frontline of this battle against climate change.

This is a battle of immense proportions. The latest projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th Assessment report tell us that the global average temperatures are projected to rise to two point six to four point eight degrees above present temperature levels. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine what a world would look like even with the lowest projection provided by the IPCC? It would be hell on earth.

The great Italian poet Dante once wrote: “The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis”.

These words are no less relevant today. We are all facing the biggest moral crisis of humanity. There is no place for neutrality or denial.

The alarm bells are ringing loud and clear. If we don't do something now and do it with conviction and determination we are condemning all future generations to an intolerable future. Do you want that on your conscience?

Mr President, I was in New York when civil society joined in the Peoples Climate March in September. Over 370,000 people came from all over the United States and other parts of the world, to be part of that march. There were marches held all over the world. It was a very moving experience to see thousands and thousands of people marching for climate change. I even saw a sign with Tuvalu on it. I was very touched by this. I am very, very proud of everyone who marched. I heard your call. I heard your demands. I share your concerns. Let us hope that other leaders were listening as well.

Mr President, civil society has spoken with a clear voice. It's now time to ignore the climate change deniers driven by the fossil fuel industry. It's time to ignore the big end of town driven by short term interest and profits. It's time to ignore the national leaders who don't believe in climate change. They have no conscience. They are empty shallow creatures. They only see dollars. We see the eyes of children. It is the eyes of the children that we must answer to, not the fossil fuel industry.

I ask you all to think for a moment about the term, fossil fuel. It is very apt. The fossil fuels we are burning today are made from extinct plants and animals. Fossil fuels signify extinction. We must not condemn ourselves to extinction riding on the back of the extinct. We must strive for renewal. We must dramatically change our future to renewable energy.

Mr President, I do see glimmers of hope in a potentially grim future. In the lead up to this meeting I was heartened by the emission reduction announcements made by China and the United States in the margins of the

G20 Summit. Now these two major powers must deliver on their promises. We look to you for leadership to move beyond promises and take real action.

We are also heartened by the pledges made by various countries to capitalize the Green Climate Fund. I understand that the pledges currently total around 9.50 billion dollars. While this is progress, it is still a drop in the ocean. It is no way near what is needed to transform society into a fossil free world and a world secure from the impacts of climate change.

I am also heartened by some of the progress made here at this meeting to lead us to a new climate change protocol. Tuvalu, and I suspect most of the world, believes that reaching a comprehensive new protocol in Paris is absolutely essential. We cannot repeat Copenhagen. We cannot suffer the frustration and humiliation of being asked to accept a half-hearted response to a critical global crisis.

The new protocol must be comprehensive it must cover all issues in a meaningful way. It has to include effective mitigation targets for all countries. It must deliver real outcomes on adaptation and loss and damage. It must deliver the necessary finance to transform our society. And it must deliver the technology and the necessary capacity building to ensure everyone can respond to climate change. All these pillars are essential.

Mr President, I have heard that some Parties do not agree with the inclusion of work on loss and damage in the agreement. This makes no sense. Sadly, we are inevitably going to suffer the impacts of climate change no matter how

hard we try to adapt. We must have a permanent arrangement on loss and damage that enjoys the highest level of political endorsement. We will not support a new Protocol without a substantive programme on loss and damage. I hope that is clear to our partners.

Mr President, we simply cannot ignore the strong voices from the youth, women, Indigenous Peoples who are calling for real action. We have little time left. We cannot ignore the overwhelming cry-out for urgent action. Scientists tell us that urgent action is needed. Civil society is telling us that urgent action is needed. Faith leaders are calling for urgent action.

For a truly global and universal response to climate change, Tuvalu ALSO strongly supports the meaningful participation of the twenty-three million people of the Republic of China/Taiwan in the climate change negotiations. ROC/Taiwan is amongst the top ten largest economies of the world and a major GHG emitter. They have also made significant commitments of GHG reduction targets to be achieved in parallel and comparative to many industrialised nations. The ROC is also already contributing immensely to technology development and transfer, and capacity building for adaptation to many peoples of the world to cope with climate change. The active and meaningful participation of the ROC/Taiwan in the UNFCCC processes is critical, and as such must be considered in earnest.

Mr President, I ask everyone who leaves this room to look into the eyes of the first child they see. I want everyone to look into the child's eyes and imagine

what those eyes will see in ten or twenty years. Will they see hell or will they see a sustainable planet.

Mr President, let us stand proud in Paris. Let us look into the eyes of children and say, yes we have a real future for you. Let us make 2015 the year we saved the Earth! Let us make 2015 the year we saved Tuvalu. For if we save Tuvalu we save the world.

Thank you

TUVALU MO TE ATUA.