



**UNFCCC COP20/CMP10
LIMA, PERU 2014**

**STATEMENT OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

My delegation extends its sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Peru for their warm hospitality and kindness accorded to us since our arrival.

1. Allow me to also associate ourselves with the statements delivered by Nauru on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, and Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President,

2. It is clearly evident that the climate change paradigm is at the forefront of today's global issues having garnered global momentum faster than all other world issues due to its ominous impacts to global co-existence, and no-where is this more evident than in the low-lying islands of the Pacific.
3. Tonga's smallness in size, and low-lying and scattered geography, has placed her as one of many small islands living on the frontlines of climate change. Tonga has been identified as the second most-at-risk country in the world to natural hazards, which is further compounded by the adverse impacts of climate change.
4. Testament to these climate impacts is the most recent Tropical Cyclone Ian. A Category 5 cyclone, which in January of this year, devastated Tonga's central island group of Ha'apai resulting in destruction totalling US\$120 Million.
5. With science proposing an increase in frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones, this places an even greater burden on Tonga and all Small Island Developing States. Yet we remain committed to mitigating these risks to our lives and livelihoods, and to building our capacity and resilience.

Mr. President,

6. Tonga recognizes the threat that climate change poses, and has made significant steps toward a more resilient and sustainable future through application of both vertical and horizontal integration of climate change related stakeholders ensuring a ‘whole-of-country approach’ in the fight against climate change.
7. Tonga is the pioneer in the synthesis of Climate Change and Disaster Risk through implementation of our Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management, and we have now increased our mitigation efforts to achieve an ambitious 100% RE by 2020 via Tonga’s Energy Road Map.
8. Tonga also pioneered the Pacific Region in the establishment of its Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Disaster, and the first in the Pacific to implement its Third National Communication.
9. These activities are testament to Tonga’s marked increase and high priority to both mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
10. Tonga considers climate change to be the greatest threat to our very survival, and have highlighted through national efforts, the need to respond urgently and adequately to the social, economic and security impacts of climate change, to ensure our survival and viability.

Mr. President,

11. With only 0.01% of global emissions produced by the Pacific as a region, Tonga understands that we co-exist in a Global Commons, and that as a global family we must foster global partnerships as a measure to catalyze global ambitions.
12. Yet, in light of our limited human resources, and economic capacity, we as one of the worlds most vulnerable countries, have no alternative but to leave no stone unturned, or leave anything to chance, and spare no expense, because no monetary value can be ascribed to ‘one’s right to exist’.
13. It is in this context, that the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Tonga urge world leaders to revise their development strategies by taking up the challenge of adopting and reverting to more sustainable means for development, which is key to ensuring a sustainable and cleaner future for all.
14. The failure to act and implement such initiatives to counter the effects of climate change will guarantee the rapid deterioration of our planet, our people, our islands, and our cultures.
15. Chair, allow me to call on world leaders to seek solutions that focus on accelerating actions and increasing ambition and to also take concrete action nationally and in doing so we may discontinue existing in this ‘Tragedy of the Commons’
16. Finally as Chair of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDs), a group

statement will be attached herein and uploaded to the UNFCCC website.

Thank you Mr. President,

Malo ‘aupito

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PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Statement from the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) at the Opening of the High-level Segment of the 20th Conference of the Parties and the 10th Session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol: Peru, Lima; 11 December 2014

**Mr. President,
His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Madam Executive Secretary,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. The following Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) are represented in Lima, namely: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu. The PSIDS Group also aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).
2. The PSIDS Group would like to extend its deep appreciation to you, the people, and the Government of Peru for hosting this very important event for the great hospitality and support provided to our delegations.
3. Recognizing that 2014 is the International Year of SIDS the PSIDS Group were actively involved in this year's SIDS conference, as with the Rio, Barbados, Johannesburg, Mauritius and Rio+20 conferences. As articulated by the Hon. Prime Minister of Samoa: "the 'special case of SIDS' is a clear recognition by partners of our vulnerabilities and the unique challenges faced by our small, isolated, but incredibly beautiful and unique island nations".

4. We share the concerns the UN Secretary General raised a few months ago at the UN Climate Summit on Climate change in New York about the extreme vulnerability of Small Island Developing States. The Pacific region has many of the most low-lying countries on Earth – Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands, parts of FSM, Cook Islands, Fiji, Palau, Solomon Islands, PNG, as well as Nauru.

5. Although our Pacific countries only contribute 0.03% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, we will be the first to go under water if the business as usual scenarios of the IPCC eventuate. We have continuously called for ambitious global targets which would ensure our long term survival as nations. As you may know, SIDS have called for the most ambitious target of limiting global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

6. We must all work collectively, with a sense of urgency and purpose, to address these challenges and to support all island countries to become more resilient.

7. In the Pacific, our actions on the ground focus on strengthening resilience – through implementation of climate change adaptation and renewable energy strategies in sectors such as water, agriculture, food security, health, tourism, energy and coastal zone management, continuing to build on the lessons and good practices from our climate change projects.

8. Pacific island countries are taking measures to protect and better manage natural ecosystems and address emerging challenges. This is vital to protect our precious island biodiversity and also as a key front line response to a changing climate and rising sea levels. Our work on the ground is based on the best available science, drawn from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other credible research programs.

9. The point is that the Pacific Island Countries have done a lot on climate change with limited resources, but much more needs to be done. On adaptation, we need to replicate the successes of effective projects. This is a key message for the UNFCCC – the Pacific have the skills and knowledge to implement real tangible solutions. The guidance to the financing mechanisms should call for flexibility for SIDS and allow for replication of best practices, and should be commensurate to needs in the region.

10. The climate change negotiations are entering a crucial stage as we prepare for developing a new legal instrument. While many terms are being used to describe it, in the region our stakeholders are very clear that we talk about a legally binding treaty. The Pacific needs certainty and assurances that all countries will do what the eventual treaty will say. The issue is too important. Climate change has as much if not more destructive power than the scourge of terrorism,

and we do not hear leaders talk about setting up a voluntary market based response to counter terrorism! There are no endless discussions on whether there should be co-financing measures to protect our citizens.

11. Furthermore, we hope to seek clarity on the INDC process at this session. It is important for the long term survival of SIDS that the ambitions put forward by countries deliver real reductions in emissions that can be quantifiable, and are measurable and transparent. As mentioned earlier, SIDS stand ready to do their part, and with assistance from the international community stand ready to contribute with concrete climate actions. We call on development partners to accelerate technical and financial support to the Pacific Island countries to enable us to develop our INDCs and translate our ambitious aspirations into actions.

12. While SIDS stand ready to contribute to global actions on climate change, it can only do so through the provision of on-going financial and technical support. We are most appreciative, therefore, of the on-going work to ensure that the GCF becomes operational, and we trust that the capacity constraints faced by SIDS will be taken into consideration when determining criteria to access funds. At the same time the Adaptation Fund is an important funding mechanism to our region, and we call for continued support, including the 80 million dollars that has been requested to ensure that the AF remains operational. We would also like to note that our private sector is willing to engage on climate change but the current one-size-fits-all approach of the Multilateral Development Banks is not conducive to the constructive and innovative ideas coming from our region. Having a \$10 million floor for concessional loans represents a “valley of death” for climate change financing.

13. Loss and Damage is an important issue to all PSIDS. As such, we fought hard to have the Warsaw International Mechanism established at COP 19.

14. Addressing loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change is an issue of fundamental importance to the Pacific Islands whose communities and economies are trying to cope with immediate losses that are now being experienced for which there is no capacity to respond. Indeed the very existence of a number of our member countries is in peril and the science tells us that impact such as sea level rise, ocean acidification and temperature increases are manifesting faster and in greater volume than predicted just five years ago.

15. We are placed in a position of having to deal with loss and damage from climate change impacts that cannot be adapted to. The very survival of our member nations is in all our hands. This is a grave responsibility and we must act with the urgency it demands.

16. We would like to acknowledge the efforts and work done by the Interim Executive Committee on the two-year work plan. We therefore, would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the interim Executive Committee for their efforts and hard work.

17. It is imperative that the work ahead places clear focus and priority on particularly vulnerable developing countries supported by partners as it is set out in Article 4 of the Convention.

18. We are of the opinion that Loss and Damage should be included in the new legal agreement within the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) and we believe that it must be treated as an individual and separate element because work on loss and damage goes beyond the ability and threshold of adaptation actions.

19. It is quite clear to the Pacific that neither adaptation, nor mitigation alone will avoid the damages and losses that are currently being experienced and will continue to experience in the short to medium term. Pacific island countries, therefore, view as mandatory that the long-term global temperature rise does not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius and that mitigation ambition accurately reflects the long-term global goal. This is crucial for the survival today of particularly vulnerable countries and for all countries tomorrow. By keeping global temperature rise to below 1.5 C, we can hope for less risk of permanent loss and damage in the long term.

20. It is essential that resource mobilization, support and building the capacity at the national and regional levels to address the issues related to loss and damage continues by establishing a financial facility to complement the work of the Executive Committee as it implements its work plan.

21. Although there might be similarities in the work of other bodies outside of the Convention let us all be clear that no other international institution deals with issues related to human-induced, anthropogenic climate change. Therefore, we should always bear this in mind as the focus of our work here.

22. The IPCC AR5 and the presentations made here, has provided us with a further wakeup call in relation to the review of the long term goal on climate change. Four out of the five RFCs have been identified by IPCC as being of moderate to high risk for a warming level of 1.5 degrees:

(i). **Unique Systems:** Ecosystems and cultures, e.g. coral reef system. Already high at 1.5°C warming

(ii). **Extreme weather:** Tropical cyclones, droughts and floods. High impacts on crop yields and water availability. Risk assessed high to moderate at 1.5°C

(iii). **Distribution:** Unevenly distributed for countries at all levels of development. Tropical and low-lying countries most vulnerable

(iv). **Aggregate Impacts:** on global economy - Moderate at 1.5°C. Aggregate nature insensitive to country differences; and

(v). **Singular Events:** Irreversible tipping points. Most relevant for sea-level rise

23. We therefore call for action by the COP to ensure that this review is completed in a timely manner so that it can inform parties in making their INDCs, and in informing our decision making in Paris. From our perspective, a 1.5 degree target is essential, as we are already experiencing destructive events and impacts under the current less than 1 degree Celsius level.

24. Ocean observation and acidification are critical issues for PSIDS and there is an extreme lack of observation stations as well as analysis laboratories in SIDS. In particular the Pacific is under-served when it comes to observation stations and other forms of data collection. We would urge development partners to support SIDS in improving their observation networks and establish new monitoring stations.

25. In this regard, the work of WMO on GFCS is welcomed, and again we call for development partners to utilize this framework to assist SIDS with enhancing their observation systems, including for ocean acidification.

26. We request that the development partners heed our call for greater financial and technical resources to be provided in particular to SIDS regions.

We thank you, Mr. President.