



**Vanuatu**

**Statement delivered by**



**The Minister of Climate Change, Adaptation, Geo-Hazard, Environment and Energy, the Honorable Jerome Ludvaune**

**At the High-Level Segment of the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

**Tuesday 8 December 2015  
Paris, France**

Mr President,  
Heads of Government,  
Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are standing at a historical junction. We have worked tirelessly for years, and again last week, to try to bridge our differences. We have come a long way, but the road is long and the end is not yet in sight.

The main reason why we are here in Paris is to put dangerous climate change to a halt. The first step is to draw the line at a level of temperature rise that minimises the risks that climate change poses to our very survival. As you know, Vanuatu is still recovering from nation-wide suffering and devastation inflicted by severe category 5 Cyclone Pam, now exacerbated by the drought induced by the strongest ever El Niño event. Human lives, the lives of my people, have been lost.

We, the leaders of the world, must stop this crisis, drawing the line here in Paris. We wish we could prevent ALL further warming, so that further suffering is prevented. Lamentably, scientists tell us this is impossible, and further warming is inevitable. We do know that limiting warming to well-below 1.5 degree Celsius IS still within our reach.

For Vanuatu, this is about my people's lives, not just an arbitrary number, but our very existence in small islands. The life-threatening droughts, catastrophic cyclones and the steady loss of our agricultural crops and coral reefs and fishing grounds are already wiping out our livelihoods and even the very existence of our villages. If the global community don't recognise 1.5 degrees as the upper limit now, you will have quashed Vanuatu's last chance to LIFE,

what we strongly believe is our fundamental human right. We must draw the 1.5 degree line firmly in the Global Goal of the agreement, and agree on legally binding, quantified mitigation commitments that increase global ambition over successive commitment cycles. My people also need us to take highly ambitious pre-2020 action that gets us onto the pathway of below 1.5 degree now.

Mr. President, we won't get the ambitious action Vanuatu needs without fairness and the rule of law. We have a constitution of international climate change law—the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change—which allocates rights and obligations based on historical responsibility and capacity. The Paris outcome must strengthen rather than weaken the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Developed countries **MUST** uphold their obligations under the Convention to enable developing countries to realise their right to sustainable development. Finance, capacity building and technology must be delivered with the objective to limit the long-term temperature goal to below 1.5 degree. We also need a strong compliance mechanism capable of ensuring that we respect the commitments we have made in the UNFCCC, so that we don't get further off track and lose more human lives.

Of course, the Paris agreement must also respond to the impacts of climate change that are already happening, and becoming ever worse. Our adaptation needs exceed our capacity. It is crucial that adaptation support rests on the developed countries' obligations under the Convention rather than shifting the burden to developing countries with limited means. Of this support, we need clarity on sources and predictability. Procedures for direct access must be simplified. Finance must be scaled up dramatically to meet our adaptation needs.

We need a standalone Article on Loss and Damage, as a matter of survival for small island developing states like Vanuatu. The G77 proposal is reasonable and should be part of the Paris agreement. It must not be diluted.

Mr. President, we are not just victims. Vanuatu is a proud nation with a wealth of cultural and traditional knowledge. We have 117 different languages and has been twice called the happiest nation on Earth. Our traditional knowledge gives us resilience and so we urge Parties to recognise the rights of indigenous peoples and the importance of traditional knowledge in all relevant parts of the Paris agreement. Similarly, the rights of women, youth and persons with disabilities must be reflected throughout the agreement. Paris outcome Vanuatu envisages will protect our islands and cultures, and strengthen our resilience to cope with the climate change crisis. It will enable us to exercise our human right to LIFE and to make our own unique contributions to the global community, and its happiness, resilience and sustainability.

Thank you Mr. President.