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REMARKS AT COP 23 OPEN DIALOGUE

Bonn, Germany

1000 November 8 2017

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Bula vinaka, guten morgen and a very good morning to you all.

This is the first open dialogue between parties and non-parties in the history of the COP process. It's not a side event. It has been mandated by the Parties and is designed to bring state actors and non-state actors together in the Bula Zone.

I'm delighted as COP23 president that we have been able to connect in this manner. Because it goes to the heart of the Grand Coalition concept that Fiji has been promoting all year.

Of course, we understand that the formal negotiations are governed by the idea of a party driven process. But we also understand that the rich variety of non-state actors represented in this room have a great deal to contribute to that process. In fact, without the non-state actors, we will fall short of the objectives set by the Parties.

It is critical that we enhance the engagement between the various elements of the Grand Coalition. Whether it is in the development of the next NDCs – the Nationally Determined Contributions to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Or improving the procedures here at the COP to take in the contributions of non-state actors.

When we learn more about what is actually being delivered at the local level, we may find that our NDCs can be enhanced relatively easily. Because so much is already happening there that has not yet been accounted for.

Today, we will not be negotiating. We will be talking to each other. And we will be listening. This is the perfect setting for adopting the Talanoa Spirit that is so much a part of what Fiji brings to the Presidency.

Together, we should learn how to engage all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and billions of ordinary citizens in the formation of the national plans for climate action.

There will be good experiences to share and frankly, it's the only way forward. But we must also be honest about what is not working. Because the

Talanoa Spirit isn't just about being nice to everyone - although respect is essential. It is about contributing to a solution that requires a degree of straight talking. And whoever you represent today, I encourage you to embrace that spirit - honest, constructive dialogue for the common good.

Your contributions will be noted and a report will be delivered to the Bureau that I chair. And I can assure you that your views will be taken into account.

I will now hand you over to Her Excellency the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Patricia Espinosa, and I wish you well in your discussions.

Vinaka vakalevu, Danka Schon, Thank you.

