

Statement by the Republic of Vanuatu
at the High-Level Segment
of the 18th Conference of the Parties to the
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate
Change
Doha, Qatar
Delivered by
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Conservation

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MR PRESIDENT,

On behalf of the Prime Minister and the people of the Republic of Vanuatu, allow me to express our deepest gratitude to you and to the State of Qatar for the kind hospitality provided to our delegation at this 18th Session of the Conference of The Parties. The friendly faces and warm support provided by your veritable army of volunteers and support staff have been most welcome by my delegation since we arrived here over a fortnight ago.

Allow me to congratulate the State of Qatar for the excellent arrangements for the COP18-CMP8. Allow me also to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your appointment as the COP18 President. My delegation is confident that we will conclude a successful outcome in Doha, that advances all the good works, commitments of previous UNFCCC COP decisions, through your very able leadership.

Vanuatu associates itself with the statements made by Algeria, on behalf of G77 & China, Nauru on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and the Gambia, on behalf of the Least Developed Countries. These parties have emerged as the leaders here at COP18.

At this point, Mr. President, the people of Vanuatu share their heartfelt condolences and their deepest sympathies

with the people of the Philippines for their losses caused by Typhoon Bopha. Your people are in our thoughts and our prayers.

MR PRESIDENT,

This year, 2012, the United Nations World Risk Report ranked Vanuatu **as the Most At Risk Country From Natural Disasters**. The risks from natural disasters are exacerbated by the adverse impacts of climate change! Being number one is a tragedy. We are losing our livelihoods, our homes, our culture and our identity. From increasing food insecurity in our once bountiful island gardens to dwindling and increasingly salinated groundwater resources to human fatalities with ever-intensifying tropical cyclones, Vanuatu is losing a battle that it does not, alone, have the capacity to win.

Mr. PRESIDENT,

Vanuatu's oceans absorb 16 million metric tons of Carbon dioxide per year while we emit only .056 million metric tons a year. Put more clearly, Vanuatu is absorbing 300 times more Carbon than we emit and have been providing this climate service to the rest of the world since fossil fuel emissions began.

Thus at the bottom of this horrifying situation in our nation is a fundamental climate injustice perpetrated

against vulnerable countries such as Vanuatu. Business as usual is no longer environmentally feasible, nor politically justifiable nor economically viable nor socially acceptable to us in Vanuatu or to anyone person who shares this planet.

MR PRESIDENT,

Each year Vanuatu engages in the UNFCCC process with high level political support and ambition with the hope that this time, if only this time, we will see Parties from around the world rouse collective ambition to decisively address the earth's greatest threat. But each year, we see some delegations come and go who are disempowered by their political leaders, who are in-turn disempowered by those who elect them.

Vanuatu thus echoes the call of the UNFCCC Executive Secretary to the global community, "Each one of us needs to assume responsibility...it's about individuals who demand to be counted in." Unless we give our governments an unequivocal political mandate to solve this problem, the problem will not be solved by any COP or any meeting of the UNFCCC.

Can we, as individual inhabitants of this earth, not agree that we are this very minute locking ourselves into greater than 2°C unless pre-2020 mitigation ambition is radically transformed?

How can we expect a global solution if we allow our governments to abandon a legally binding second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol?

Is it not logical that the Bali Action Plan, which was agreed to by all, should be adequately completed?

Mr. PRESIDENT,

My delegation remains disillusioned that there is no clarity on mid-term targets for finance. As we move to the final days of climate negotiations in Doha, there is still no certain finance stream that would start in 2013 when “Fast Start Finance” ends at the end of this year.

Mr. PRESIDENT,

The outcome of the Doha COP cannot be a success if our Developed Country partners continue to resist making concrete pledges to avoid a finance gap between 2013-2020. Here in Doha, a roadmap must also be decided and agreed upon which outlines stepping stones to reach the 2020 USD100 billion target.

Mr. PRESIDENT,

The latest reports on scientific analyses, including from the IPCC, the World Bank, UNEP, Climate Analytics and

hundreds of others leave no doubt as to the urgency and severity of taking action now, as delayed action will be more costly and as such no longer viable. Vanuatu cannot even begin to comprehend the now certain losses from sea level rise, water shortages and extreme climate events like tropical cyclones and storm surges.

Mr. PRESIDENT,

To increase ambition, Vanuatu is calling for comprehensive schedule of activities for 2013 for the ADP, including sector workshops to operationalize emission reduction actions that are implementable IMMEDIATELY.

Vanuatu itself is walking the talk and itself putting ambitious mitigation targets on the table via NAMA implementation and calls for others to do the same. To adapt and recover the costs of irreversible loss and damage, Vanuatu is calling for heavy up-front investment in the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund by all Parties (including by civil society and the private sector) that allow for scaled up, predictable, new and additional sources of climate funding.

Certainly not least, unless we get the UNFCCC on track for real and meaningful gender balance, we will be missing out on the huge potential that women bring to this

process. I would even venture to state that many of this COP's issues would have been solved were gender balance achieved.

To conclude Mr. President,

Along with our partners from AOSIS, LDC and G77 and China, we have put concrete strategies on the table; strategies that offer real pathways to the global goal of reversing the current trends and meeting the objectives of the Convention. We will not concede to any decisions or actions here that would further destruct, deduct, subtract, divide and compromise the integrity of our planet's climate system.

Mr. PRESIDENT,

Meaningful ambition targets cannot be achieved unless all parties to the Kyoto Protocol sign up to a second commitment period for a 5 year term and move to higher ranges of pledges made.

Mr. PRESIDENT,

Count the People of Vanuatu in.

I thank you.