



Government of the Cook Islands

UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2024

13 November 2024

Baku, Azerbaijan

“Cook Islands High-Level Statement at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2024”

Remarks prepared for Hon. Mark Brown, Cook Islands Prime Minister

Honourable President,

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates

Kia Orana

I come from the Pacific. A part of the world that contributes 0.03% of carbon emissions to the world.

The Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius remains within our reach—but only if you act decisively. And when I say you, I’m talking to the G20 countries that contribute 80% of carbon emissions. Our many countries in the Pacific are doing our part in mitigation with ambitious projects for 100% of renewable energy. The science is clear: the world is warming, and the transition away from fossil fuels is non-negotiable, as underscored by last year’s Global Stock-take Outcome. This challenge goes beyond economics; it is about safeguarding our communities’ resilience, even in the remotest corners. Climate change is not a distant threat; it is a present reality that we face every day in the Pacific. And now we see

its impact in the developed countries with Spain being the latest victim just a couple of weeks ago. We don't need to be enemies to each other – climate change is and will continue to be the biggest enemy to all of us. WE need to work together.

Let me talk about climate finance.

Climate finance is not just the catalyst for climate action, it is the essential ingredient. Developing countries need sufficient and reliable support to implement the Paris Agreement effectively. For small island developing states, specific finance provisions within the Paris Agreement recognize our unique vulnerabilities. A successful New Collective Quantified Goal must reflect this. We call for minimum allocation floors on the New Collective Quantified Goal for SIDS, directly linked with the provision goal. This floor should be no less than 40 billion in grant-equivalent terms per year—a conservative estimate based on our pressing needs.

To achieve meaningful progress, SIDS must have access to high levels of concessional finance. This means grant funding for adaptation efforts, not loans, it means grant-based finance for loss and damage response. Do the right thing by our countries, don't make us jump hoops and then wait. Accelerating the financing support will bring us closer to the scaled-up finance and improved access envisioned by the Paris Agreement.

While the Pacific faces the brunt of climate change through—sea-level rise, erosion of small islands, flooding, droughts, and extreme weather—inaction will lead to consequences felt globally, growing more severe with time. So, let us ask ourselves, “What if this were my home? My family?” This shared sense of humanity should inspire us to work towards tangible, transformative outcomes over the coming days, ensuring that COP29 concludes with meaningful progress.

These appeals have been voiced countless times, including by myself at previous COPs. Yet here we are again, frustrated by inaction,

unheard, and facing resistance to the necessary scale-up of climate finance. For the sake of those most vulnerable, we must set a path forward that aligns with the urgent realities we face. My country is ready—again—to play its part. The question remains: are we ready to act decisively and collaboratively for future generations?

I thank you.