

Prime Minister Bainimarama, President of
the COP,

Minister Mezouar, [*Mesuar*]

Executive Secretary Espinosa,

Mayor Sridharan,

Excellences,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Bula Vinaka! It gives me great pleasure to
welcome you all to Bonn.

I come from this region, and I can assure you that the people of Bonn are very proud to have you here.

As host to the UN Climate Change Secretariat, Bonn is evolving into a global centre of climate action and an international hub of sustainable development.

Germany, and in particular the city of Bonn, are delighted to be your hosts for the next two weeks.

I hope that you will feel very at home here, and we will do everything we possibly can to ensure that you do.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

The fact that Fiji has the presidency of this year's COP sends a powerful message.

Prime Minister Bainimarama, Germany and Fiji have been working together very closely in recent months, and a real friendship has now developed between our two teams.

I would like to offer my thanks for this, and for Fiji's commitment and your own personal dedication.

A small island state – and representative of the particularly vulnerable countries – is chairing a Climate Change Conference for the very first time.

The international community needs to focus to a much greater extent on the situation in these countries, and we all have to support Fiji's presidency to this end.

There is a point of no return for humanity. And we will reach this point if we disregard the upper temperature limit agreed at the Paris Conference of the Parties.

And may I thank Minister Mezouar who - as President of COP22 - clearly pointed out where our focus has to be: on action and implementation.

In Paris, we agreed to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius and, if possible, to 1.5 degrees Celsius. We have

to achieve this with the combined forces of our nationally determined contributions.

The fact is, this is not the case as things stand. All countries in the world have to step up their efforts to reach the agreed national targets and to increase the ambition of these targets.

Moving away from fossil industries is difficult throughout the world. I know all about how difficult it is. But we have to persevere and continue on this path, otherwise our planet will continue to heat up.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In August this year, Tony de Brum passed away. Many of us were proud to call him

our friend. He was a perfect role model for collaborative dedication to protecting our precious planet.

In Paris, he forged and led the high-ambition coalition because he knew that climate change will bring great suffering to many regions in the world. In Paris, we entered the conference arm-in-arm as a sign of our common commitment. Now, we have to remain united and follow our words with deeds.

Ladies and gentlemen, Colleagues

Over the next two weeks we will be negotiating, but that is not all we will be doing.

The COP also provides a platform for numerous stakeholders to demonstrate that greenhouse gas reductions and the transformation to a sustainable society are already well underway.

To this end, we have set up two zones: the Bula Zone, where the negotiations will take place, and the Bonn Zone, which will showcase projects under the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, and host side events and exhibitions.

Another reason for having two zones is to enable us to invite many more representatives of civil society than had been possible at previous COPs.

In establishing this concept, we were able to draw on a wealth of experience at the UN Climate Change Secretariat. I would like to thank you, Patricia Espinosa, and your wonderful team, for the very constructive cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have to make significant progress on implementing the Paris Agreement here at COP23.

We should be guided by the big picture:

Firstly, climate change has been scientifically proven. The impacts are

already being clearly felt today.

Climate change poses a threat to the natural foundations of our lives, and is even an existential threat to some countries of the world.

Secondly, the Paris Agreement is irreversible. We now have to do everything in our power to implement it. And we do not have much time left.

Thirdly, every dollar that we invest today in climate action pays off in cleaner air, better health and new economic and social opportunities for the future of our countries. We can, and in fact we must, shape a world in which our children and grandchildren can lead good lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, Colleagues,

Limiting greenhouse gas emissions is a central challenge for the future. But even if we master this challenge together, we will not be able to completely stop climate change in its tracks. Adaptation measures will be required in many countries, which is why adaptation to climate change is an equally important second pillar of the Paris Agreement. Germany has been very committed in this area in the past and will remain so in future.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to announce that we will once again support

the Adaptation Fund this year with an additional 50 million euros.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish us all every success and wish you a pleasant stay here in Bonn. Thank you.