



Republic of Nauru

High-Level Statement at the 26th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC

11 November 2021

The Republic of Nauru welcomes this opportunity provide this statement for the High-Level Segment of the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. [Nauru aligns this statement with the high-level statements delivered by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and by the Republic of Guinea on behalf of the G77 and China.]

Leading up to this historic conference, the world was treated to the latest round of scientific studies highlighting the scale of the climate crisis. The UNEP Emissions Gap Report concluded that we are still on a pathway consistent with a rise in temperature far above our goals in the Paris Agreement. Such an outcome would devastate small island developing states and many other vulnerable communities throughout the developing and the developed world.

A second UNEP report highlighted The Production Gap. It concluded that the world is on track to produce *twice* the amount of fossil fuels than what is consistent with limited warming to 1.5 degrees. Despite this jaw-dropping overshoot, the fossil fuel industry has been showered with subsidies totaling \$1.6 trillion since the adoption of the Paris Agreement alone.

In addition to these two enormous gaps that currently plague the global response to climate change, developing countries have continued to call out a third and equally important one – the finance gap. Developed countries have still not delivered on their pledge to jointly mobilize \$100 billion in climate finance per year for developing countries. We knew when this pledge was made in 2009 that the amount was far from sufficient to meet the adaptation and mitigation needs of developing countries,

but it still represented a substantial increase over the paltry sums delivered under the Convention before. We are now past the 2020 deadline to reach this threshold and the prospects of climate finance at the scale required seem more distant than ever.

It is difficult to quantify how much the finance gap has undermined trust in this process and the promise of multilateralism more broadly. The political will to take ambitious action exists in most developing countries around the world, but it is held back by the inadequate sums of affordable finance available to us. Small Island Developing States confront their own particular set of barriers to access, despite our urgent adaptation needs. This is why we must streamline application procedures for multilateral climate funds and dramatically scale up the amount of grant-based finance available for adaptation.

The shortfall on climate finance has largely forced developing countries to fend for themselves. We are seeing first hand how that looks with the international response to the current pandemic. Rather than empower developing countries to scale up the production of vaccines to meet the needs of their populations, our partners have chosen to protect patents and profits at the cost of millions of lives.

We do not need more charity. We need a Just Transition.

Nauru, like most small islands, has bold plans to transform our energy system and our economy. Taking bold, ambitious climate action to address climate change is central to our efforts to guarantee our people affordable energy, clean water and sanitation, basic healthcare, a good education, and safe, affordable housing.

The current fossil fuel economy imposes enormous costs on society, and nowhere is this more apparent than in small islands. As a primary driver of climate change, fossil fuel use threatens the long-term viability and survival of our communities. The negative impacts hit us hard in the pocket book as well. Our energy bill for imported fuel is enormous, and drains funding that could be better used to improve basic infrastructure and public services for our people.

A Just Transition would mean empowering countries and communities to pursue their sustainable development goals free from the burden of fossil fuel dependence. It would mean local production and ownership of life's most vital resources, like energy, water, and food. A just transition needs to empower developing countries to invest in our people and our infrastructure. And a global just transition that rapidly phases out fossil fuels in line with 1.5 degrees and transitions to an economy powered by renewables would provide vulnerable communities around the world greater safety from the dangerous impacts of climate change.

That national elements of a just transition in Nauru are reflected in our updated Nationally Determined Contribution. We have set a renewable energy generation target of 50% and will also pursue energy savings across the economy equal to 30%. There is ample political will to go even further if it can be matched with finance and technical support that is needed.

Equally important are our actions to build resilience in the areas of food and water security and public health. The centerpiece of our ambitious sustainable development strategy is the Higher Ground Initiative, which will migrate vulnerable homes and critical infrastructure away from vulnerable coastal areas to the higher elevation interior of the island. We will be pioneering a new Pacific Island Urbanism that provides not only green housing and more walkable communities, but also significantly expands local food production, captures and recycles water, and restores degraded natural habitats.

Despite the headlines of disappearing islands, the people of Nauru have no intention of going anywhere. We are moving forward with an ambitious plan to build resilience, slash fossil fuel use, and restore the natural and cultural heritage of our home.

However, we will still need the support of partners. This is a global effort, in which all nations can and must contribute, which is why Taiwan should be included. Taiwan has proven itself a responsible stakeholder, committed to combating climate change. Taiwan therefore must be accorded the opportunity to participate in global mechanisms, negotiations and activities that promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

We will need access to affordable finance. While that must begin with developed countries meeting and then exceeding their \$100 billion pledge, it cannot stop there. We must mobilize alternatives to debt-based financing, including innovative financial mechanisms like direct budgetary support and the Barbados proposal for \$500 billion per year in special drawing rights. There must also be consideration of debt restructuring and much greater cancellation.

Three gaps – the emissions gap, the production gap, and the finance gap – loom over COP26 and will continue to erode the credibility of the UNFCCC until they are closed. Do not be fooled by the spectacle of press releases for underfunded initiatives and non-binding pledges to reach net-zero in the distant future. The existing financial and economic order is simply not up to the task to deliver on the goals of the Paris Agreement, and those who cling to it are just as destructive to the global effort as the most strident climate deniers.

We need a fundamental restructuring of finance grounded in the principles of fairness and equity. We need a system that enables nations to make the substantial investments in basic infrastructure resilience to climate change impacts. We need to ensure the vulnerable, the marginalized, and the most negatively affected are protected and have an equal place in renewable energy economy that is built. We need a Global Just Transition.