

*High-Level Ministerial Dialogue on Climate Finance – Statement by Head of Delegation (TONGA) Chief Secretary and Secretary to Cabinet, Mr. Paula Ma'u*

Mr President, Excellencies,

I make this intervention following on from, and in support of the statement made by the Honourable Minister of Fiji as high level political champion for the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (Pacific SIDS), who has highlighted the important case for Pacific SIDS including Tonga.

Firstly, Tonga wishes to acknowledge that while it welcomes the launch of the Baku to Belem Roadmap, we caution on its emphasis to scale up private finance, highlighting that blended finance has had limited success in mobilising capital at the pace and scale required, and this has been acknowledged through various fora including the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4). As public finance levels continue to decline, Tonga echoes the call for a renewed emphasis on grant financing, in recognition of the challenges we face in terms of our limited fiscal space.

Secondly, we welcome the adoption of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) by the United Nations General Assembly and encourage its uptake by multilateral development banks and climate finance entities. The MVI offers a more accurate basis for assessing eligibility and access, particularly for SIDS like Tonga whose vulnerabilities are not adequately captured by income-based metrics. The Baku to Belem roadmap presents an opportunity to integrate MVI into the operational frameworks of the international financial architecture, ensuring climate financing reaches those most in need.

Third, we support our region's calls for ongoing reform efforts across the multilateral climate funds, noting that despite progress - persistent access barriers still remain. These include lengthy and unclear accreditation procedures, as well as insufficient recognition of due diligence already undertaken by other multilateral funds and development banks. We call for deeper harmonisation and coherence between all actors serving the multilateral channels of climate finance.

Finally, on loss and damage, we stress that relevant financial instruments must go beyond slow-onset event responses. There is an urgent need for predictable, pre-arranged, and readily accessible finance for sudden-onset extreme weather events for which a formal project cycle cannot serve the same purpose. Such finance should be fast-disbursing and designed with the realities of SIDS like Tonga in mind, including through the use of parametric and contingency-based mechanisms.

Malo 'aupito. Tu'a 'Ofa Atu