



## **Statement of Mr. Paula Pouvalu Ma'u**

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of the  
Government of the Kingdom of Tonga**

at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
Conference of the Parties also serving as the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the  
Kyoto Protocol, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement

Katowice, Poland, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018

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*Mr. President,*  
*Excellencies,*  
*Distinguished delegates*  
*Ladies and Gentlemen*

1. At the outset, allow me to first express the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga's utmost gratitude to His Excellency Hon. Michal Kurtyka and the people and Government of Poland for their most sincere and warm hospitality accorded our delegation upon our arrival.
2. Allow me to also extend our gratitude to the city and citizens of Katowice for their extraordinary support and cooperation in hosting this 24<sup>th</sup> Session in the beautiful 'City of Music'.

***Mr. President,***

3. COP21, Paris, France 2015 was indeed a highly significant step in enhancing global unity on the world's most ominous issue that is climate change. Indeed, the adoption of the Paris Agreement was a first step by the global community toward ensuring the very survival of not only small island states such as Tonga, but also that of the planet we all call home.
4. We are now here in Katowice to progress on the landmark steps made in Paris. COP24 has been coined as Paris 2.0, in essence COP24 has presented us with the opportunity to substantiate the decisions we collectively made in Paris, which was to complete the Paris Agreement Work Programme.

***Mr. President,***

5. It is irrefutable that the effects of Climate Change increasingly threaten the very existence of Small Island Developing States such as Tonga. Effects that are rapidly increasing our vulnerabilities and swiftly eroding our capacities for resilience.
6. We continue to experience unprecedented rates of coastal erosion, flash flooding events, coastal inundation, which are further compounded by a rise in sea-level 3 times higher than global average, and tropical cyclones predicted to increase in intensity.
7. Predictions that are now the realities we've endured, even as recent as February of 2018, when Cyclone Gita tore through our islands causing destruction and devastation on the livelihoods of our people.
8. Our capacity to rebound from such devastation has greatly diminished to a point where the requisite efforts for achieving and safeguarding our sustainable development aspirations have been extremely hampered, and will continue to be hampered should we not have the Paris Agreement Work Programme finalized here in Katowice.
9. This is a disturbing and unacceptable co-existence that in the near term will see our demise as a small island nation-state, and ultimately result in our disappearance as a people and a culture. A despondent fate that will be sealed through low ambitions, weak action and at worst inaction by those whom have the means to do so, yet refuse to.
10. We must remember that the decisions we make or fail to make here in Katowice will ultimately impact the lives of the billions of people that make up our global

community, and as a global community we must strive to ensure there is no undermining of national sovereignty, national autonomy, or national security, and is the foundation for which Tonga is calling for the establishment of climate change as a core security issue.

11. A call to the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on Climate Change and Security, and a call to have Climate Change and Security as a permanent agenda item for the UN Security Council.

12. In saying this, the work on the Paris Agreement Work Programme will hope. A hope that rests on the conscience of the global citizens, and to now be steered and guided by the Government of Poland in unison with the global community.

*Mr. President,*

13. In this light Mr. President, I must stress that the success or failure here, and especially for Tonga and other Small Island Developing States, hinges on the the need to rapidly build resilience, and the urgent need for support to address adaptation as well as loss and damage.

14. Needs as such which can be effectively achieved through the simplification of modalities for accessing international climate finance, and the establishment of a fast-track mechanism for resilience building and development in SIDS.

15. We understand that the world is currently on a course where we have now reached a 1.1 degree world, and ss such, Tonga recognizes and re-emphasizes the intrinsic value and imperative for limiting temperature increase to 1.5<sup>0</sup>C. A goal that can only be achieved through genuine global cooperation in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals, and the SAMOA Pathway.

16. A streamlined approach which is strategically reflected, framed, and aligned to all elements contained in Tonga's National Climate Change Policy 2016, Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management 2018-2028, Tonga Strategic Development Framework 2015-2025, and our Nationally Determined Contribution.

***Mr. President***

17. Upon ratifying the Paris Agreement and the Doha Amendment, Tonga is committed in ensuring rapid progression at the national level that will empower and enable our our efforts to implement the necessary actions toward achieving our NDC targets and keeping global temperature increase to 1.5°C

18. The of Kingdom of Tonga extends these same values and imperatives towards strengthening dialogue and partnerships for the enhancement of actions, support and synergies in the areas of technology, capacity building and the requisite financing for implementation.

***Mr. President,***

19. In closing, it is with the hope that this 24<sup>th</sup> installment of the Conference of the Parties is testament to the genuine partnerships and collective responsibility fostered between our countries toward delivering on the Paris Agreement Work Programme.

20. Which must contain robust elements of transparency, and a compliance mechanism with an empowered mandate that will ensure every party is held accountable and adherent to all elements in the Paris Agreement Work Programme, and all articles of the Paris Agreement.

21. Civil society, Academia, and the private sector must continue to be steadfast in your roles in ensuring genuine accountability by state actors, and continue to be the solid drivers in our search for further solutions to the adverse effects of Climate Change.
  
22. As one of fourteen Pacific frontline countries severely affected by climate change, I look forward to more hard work ahead and the promise of a truly shared and sustainable global vision and investment, for both Tonga and the world's present and future generations.
  
23. Malo 'aupito, and Thank you