



Statement of Hon. Dr. Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa

Prime Minister of the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga

at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 25th Session of the Conference of the Parties also serving as the 15th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, and the 2nd Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement

10 December 2019

Madrid, Spain,

Madame President
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. On behalf of His Majesty's Government, and the people of the Kingdom of Tonga, allow me to SINCERELY congratulate you, Madame President, on your assumption of the Presidency of the 25th Session of the Conference of the Parties for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and I can assure you, that the Tongan delegation, will fully support the critical works that are planned ahead, under your able leadership.
2. I also thank the Kingdom of Spain, and the city of Madrid, and its people for their generous host, and warm hospitality, that has been accorded to us, since our arrival.
3. My sincere gratitude, is also extended to the UNFCCC Secretariat, for all of their preparations, and arrangements, to make this gobal conference, a great success.

Madame President,

4. The *Paris Agreement* was a first step, by the global community toward ensuring the very survival, of not only the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), but also the planet we always call, home.

5. We are here, to progress our work, under this Landmark Agreement, and to stand in solidarity, with all of the Small Island Developing States, in recognition of this year's COP theme, urging all countries, that the "*Time for Action is--- Now!*"
6. Climate change, is the single greatest regional threat to the Pacific Island Countries, including Tonga. In accordance with the World Risk Report, 2016, Tonga, was ranked, as the World's Second Most 'At Risk' country, to all disasters.
7. The effects of Climate Change continue to threaten the environment, land, the ocean and the marine resources, upon which, the livelihood and existence of our people, depend very much on. In the course of time, and as, science tells us, these impacts are rapidly intensifying our vulnerabilities, and swiftly eroding our capacities for resilience.
8. In Tonga, we continue to experience record rates of coastal erosion, overflow and flash flooding. These are further compounded by the rising in sea-level, three times higher, than the global average, and tropical cyclones that are increasing in intensity, and at a rate that undermines our capacity to respond to, and recover from. Tropical Cyclone Gita which hit Tonga, in February 2018, is a strong testament to this increase.
9. We understand that the world, is currently on a course, where we have now reached a 1.1degree Celsius. Backed up by the latest IPCC Special Report,

we strongly re-emphasize the fundamental value, and imperative for limiting the temperature increase, to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

10. This can only be achieved through genuine commitment and cooperation, from governments, development partners and parties that are fully engaging in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the SAMOA Pathway.
11. I must stress the urgency and the need to strengthen our dialogue, and partnerships for the enhancement of actions, support and synergies in the areas of technology, capacity building, and the mandatory financing, for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Madame President

12. Tonga applauds the 50th Pacific Island Leaders Forum, that was convened in Tuvalu, this year for endorsing the *Kainaki II Declaration*, and calls for urgent climate action to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, and prevent the catastrophic global warming, the extreme weather events, and flooding and droughts.
13. Tonga is committed, in ensuring the rapid progression at the national level, to implement the necessary actions, toward achieving its NDC targets of 50% renewable energy by 2020, 70% by 2030 and 100% by 2035, improve energy efficiency through reduction of electricity line losses, to 9 percent by 2020, and to double the 2015 number of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by 2030.

14. Tonga is also committed to prepare its Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies, and it will be communicated, to the COP 26 next year.
15. In raising its ambition and climate action, Tonga also uses a whole-of-country approach through its Second Joint National Action Plan (JNAP), on Climate Change Adaptation, and Disaster Risk Management, 2018-2028.
16. It is with the hope, that this COP25 is a testament to the genuine partnerships and collective responsibilities of all parties, in raising their ambition and actions towards achieving the goals, of the Paris Agreement.
17. Civil society, Academia, and the private sectors, must continue to be steadfast in their coordinated roles, in ensuring genuine accountability, by the state actors, and continue to be the solid drivers, in our search for further solutions, to the continuing adverse effects of Climate Change.

I Thank You - MALO