



Statement of Mr. Paula Pouvalu Ma'u
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At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 23rd Conference of the Parties also serving as the 13th 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

Bonn, Germany, 16th November 2017

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. Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama and the people and Government of Fiji for their most sincere and warm hospitality accorded our delegation upon our arrival.
2. Allow me to also extend our gratitude to the Government of Germany, and to the city and citizens of North Rhine-Westphalia for their extraordinary support and cooperation in holding this 23rd Session here in the beautiful city that is Bonn.
3. COP21, Paris, France 2015 was indeed a highly significant step in enhancing global unity on the worlds 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. A step that has now evolved into a giant leap forward being the early entry into force of the Paris Agreement on November 4th. A date already synonymous in Tonga - the day we celebrate the promulgation of our national Constitution.
5. And in this celebratory context, we applaud those that have already taken this forward leap and ratified the Paris Agreement, and implore those that have yet to ratify, to take action in the collective spirit of humanity as witnessed on 15th October 2016, also led to the adoption of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.

Mr. President,

6. It is undeniable that the effects of Climate Change increasingly threaten the very existence of Small Island Developing States such as Tonga, whose vulnerabilities are rapidly increasing and swiftly eroding our capacities for resilience. Capacities which when strengthened, and enhanced, will catalyze the requisite efforts for achieving and safeguarding our sustainable development aspirations.
7. Such development efforts which continue to be hampered by unprecedented rates of coastal erosion, increasing occurrences of flash flooding, effects which are further compounded by tropical cyclones that are predicted to increase in intensity. Predictions as such, are the realities we currently endure.
8. A disturbing co-existence that in the long 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 inaction at worst.

9. A co-existence which will ultimately lead to an undermining our national sovereignty, our national autonomy, our national security, and is cause in calling on the establishment of climate change as a core security issue. 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.

10. In saying this, the implementation of the Paris Agreement brings new hope. A hope that rests on the conscience of the global citizens. The early entry into force just prior to COP22 in Morocco signaled the next steps for a global partnership in the battle against the effects of climate change. A partnership to now be steered and guided by the Government of Fiji and in unison with the global community.

Mr. President,

11. In this light Mr. President, I must stress that our success or failure, 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.

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

13. 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 1.5⁰C. 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.

14. A streamlined approach which is strategically reflected, framed, and aligned to all elements contained in Tonga's National Climate Change Policy 2016, in the development of our pending JNAP Phase II, and the National Organizational Outcomes in our Strategic Development Framework 2015-2025, and our Nationally Determined Contribution.

Mr. President

15. Upon ratifying the Paris Agreement, 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.

16. NDC targets that have prompted Tonga to embark on an ambitious energy road map that will see a dramatic rise in the proportion of renewable energy in its energy supply through 50% access to renewable energy by 2020 and 70% by 2030, and our commitment to double the number of Marine Protected Areas by 2030,

17. 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. Financing that is channelled through numerous initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund, that can be further enhanced through a strengthened presence in the Pacific region.

Mr. President,

18. In closing, this 23rd installment of the Conference of the Parties, and moreso the opening of the first session of the CMA is testament to the genuine partnerships and collective responsibility fostered between our countries. which must contain a robust

element of transparency. Civil society, Academia, and the private sector must play their roles in ensuring genuine accountability by state actors, and must be steadfast and continue to be the solid drivers in our search for solutions to the adverse effects of Climate Change.

19. As one of fourteen Pacific frontline countries 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.

Malo 'aupito, and Thank you