



TUVALU STATEMENT

Presented by:

Hon. Maatia Toafa

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic
Development

at the

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Bangkok, THAILAND

Your Excellency, Mr. Chairperson,

Executive Secretary,

Distinguished Head of States and delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege for me to speak on behalf of the Government and People of Tuvalu at this Seventy-Second Commission Session.

I join other distinguished colleagues in congratulating you Mr. Chairman on your appointment to the Chairmanship of this year's session.

Mr Chairman, at the outset, we express our deepest sympathies to the Government and people of Fiji for the loss of lives and suffering caused by Tropical Cyclone Winston earlier this year. As a Pacific brother, we stand together with Fiji to ensure that the lives of the people are returned to normalcy.

Mr Chairman, Tuvalu has just recently adopted its National Strategy on Sustainable Development 2016-2020 or Te Kakeega III. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement, SAMOA pathway and other development frameworks such as the Sendai Framework on disaster framework have been localized and contextualized into our new sustainable development strategy.

Mr Chairman, Climate change poses the most serious threat to the security and survival of Tuvalu, and the greatest threat to long-term development of the country. The challenges of climate change are enormous for a microstate like Tuvalu. In addition to the physical impacts of climate change that the country is experiencing, we are also dealing with the difficulty of accessing global climate funds, as well as the challenge to build adaptive capacity by climate-proofing critical infrastructure and related developments in the country. In this regard Mr. Chairperson, we strongly support the resolution sponsor by Fiji on climate change.

This year we established the Tuvalu Survival Fund to finance recovery and rehabilitation from climate change impacts and disasters, and climate change investments in adaptation and mitigation projects. After the devastating effect of Tropical Cyclone Pam in 2015, we learnt that we need this fund because of the unavailability of appropriate insurance and slow assistance to Tuvalu in an event of a natural or climate change induced disaster. The

government has made an initial contribution of \$5 million to the fund, and we invite any willing donor to join with us in further building the resources available in the fund.

Tuvalu has submitted its Intended Nationally Intended Contributions (INDC) in late 2015 and committed itself to the reduction of greenhouse gases with a 100 percent target of having electricity power generated from renewable energy by 2025. Currently 50 percent of electricity is derived from renewables and this figure is projected to rise to 75 percent by 2020. Tuvalu needs assistance on technology transfer, building capacity and funding assistance to implement its INDC.

Excellencies, Tuvalu is a sea country. Our sea area far exceeds our land area and most of our income is generated from the exploitation of our marine resources. Therefore, sustaining, protecting and conserving our marine resources is crucial. It is in this regard that I believe that Target 14.7 of the Agenda 2030 should be rigorously pursued because to many small island states, the ocean is their only livelihood. We need to maximize the benefits and returns from our fisheries resources.

Mr Chairman, the graduation criteria for LDCs need to be urgently reviewed, so that the EVI (Economic Vulnerability Index) criterion is made mandatory in the two criteria for graduation. Like our belief that accessing global climate funds should be based on countries' vulnerabilities, we also consider that the EVI criterion should be a compulsory criterion for LDC graduation.

The 2030 Agenda recognizes the need to have an effective participation and equal opportunities for women and girls at all levels. While Tuvalu is progressing in this direction, technical and financial assistance are needed to undertake the appropriate reforms, review current legislations, and adopt and strengthen economic and social policies for the empowerment of women and girls in the country.

Mr Chairman, the theme of this session "Science, technology and innovation (STI) for sustainable development" is timely and of particular importance to Tuvalu. Poor and unreliable connectivity in Tuvalu has been constraining development in the country. Improved and reliable connectivity is needed to facilitate better health and education services to the people as well as boosting private sector development and commercial activities in the country. If STI is enhanced in Tuvalu and the region, we are confident that the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda will be achievable.

Mr Chairman, in conclusion, I would like to thank again ESCAP's for its excellent work in the region. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is here for us to pursue and achieve. To do this, we require the localization of the targets into our own national plans and of course the continued partnership with development partners, private sector, non-government organizations and all stakeholders.

I thank you, Chairperson.

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