



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations
800 Second Avenue, Suite 400A, New York, N.Y. 10017

Opening of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Thirteenth Session

Statement on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States

29 November 2010

Thank you, Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States, namely Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, the Federated States of Micronesia.

The Pacific SIDS align themselves with the statement made by Grenada on behalf of AOSIS.

Madam Chair,

Mitigation of climate change was our primary focus when this process began nearly twenty years ago. Nowhere is this better reflected than in the ultimate objective of the Convention, which is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

However, far from stabilizing, emissions have continued to grow, now requiring that adaptation become a central component of our discussions.

If we cannot find the courage to act, then it is only a matter of time before the issue of climate refugees becomes one of the pillars of our negotiations. Internal migration due to the adverse impacts of climate change is already a reality for some of our island nations.

We now know that a meter of sea level rise by the end of the century is a serious risk, and it could be far worse. Category 5 cyclones are likely to become more commonplace and it is only a matter of time before one of our islands is hit. The Pacific Ocean is becoming more acidic and coral reefs are bleaching, which is causing irreparable damage to the marine ecosystems upon which our lives and livelihoods depend. I could go on.

The dangerous impacts of climate change are hitting us sooner and more severely than expected. All of our island nations will suffer. Without bold action, some of us may disappear completely.

That is why the Pacific SIDS, as members of AOSIS, have consistently called for limiting the rise in average global temperature to well below 1.5 degrees Celsius. This is necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and provide a reasonable opportunity for the survival of all our island nations.

It is essential that all nations able to do so take strong action, and in particular, Annex I countries must raise their level of ambition beyond the pledges currently on the table. The recently released UNEP report confirmed that there remains a wide gap between the emissions reduction pledges on the table and what is needed to achieve this goal. These pledges would likely take the world beyond 3 degrees – a reality that would leave many of our islands, and indeed entire island nations, uninhabitable. We must establish a process here in Cancun to reach agreement on targets, using the survival of small island nations as a minimum benchmark.

Madam Chair,

The Pacific SIDS represent a tiny fraction of global emissions, however, we are still using our limited resources to be a part of the solution. A number of our islands have announced ambitious mitigation actions. Energy security is one of our key development priorities, and we have adopted renewable energy and efficiency programmes.

Our region faces enormous hurdles implementing energy and adaptation programmes, and urgently needs the support of the international community in the areas of finance, capacity building, and technology transfer. It is essential that we establish a new global climate change fund that provides streamlined access that takes into account the special circumstances of SIDS and LDCs, so that our people can see concrete results in their communities.

The time has also come for the establishment of an international mechanism to address loss and damage to the adverse effects of climate change. This mechanism must include a climate risk insurance facility to respond to the severe weather events that can devastate our economies. Anticipated impacts make it extremely difficult to secure insurance on the private market.

Madam Chair,

Last year, the world was united in its call for a fair, ambitious, and legally binding agreement and world leaders arrived in unprecedented numbers. We fell short of our goal.

We must agree on a clear path towards a ratifiable, legally binding outcome to the LCA process for adoption in South Africa. Without major progress here in Cancun, we take another step closer towards the loss of sovereign nations.

That is why many of our Heads of State, Heads of Government, and ministers are returning this year to COP16 – to finish what we set out to do in Copenhagen and preserve a future for our people and our countries.

Thank you.