



**Statement delivered by His Excellency the Honourable Baron Waqa M.P.,  
President of the Republic of Nauru**

**United Nations General Assembly  
69<sup>th</sup> Session General Debate  
Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2014**

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your assumption to the Presidency of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly. Let me assure you of my Delegation's full support and cooperation as you steer our work during this session. I must also commend your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador John Ashe, for showing such capable leadership during the previous session. You led the Small Island Developing States through several important milestones during your tenure, including the International Year of SIDS and the recently concluded International Conference on SIDS in Samoa. It has been said that the stars are aligned for SIDS this year and Ambassador Ashe you have been our brightest beacon. Thank you

Let me also thank another distinguished champion of SIDS, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Indeed, earlier this year I sat in the Trusteeship Council Chamber when the Secretary-General helped us celebrate the launch of the International Year of SIDS.

Showing a remarkable understanding of our unique circumstances, he said, and I quote:

*"The International Year offers us the opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the people of Small Island Developing States – and to honour their many contributions to our world. It is also an opportunity to highlight the various needs and challenges of this diverse coalition. Some have enjoyed long-lasting stability. Others are in transition. Some are economically more fragile than others... Others are extremely vulnerable to the immediate effects of climate change. But all Small Island Developing States share a common understanding. We need to set our world on a sustainable path."*

End quote.

Mr. President,

The challenges of SIDS are many and one need only glance at the headlines to appreciate that they join a long list of concerns that the international community must confront today: naked brutality, pestilence, poverty, and the worsening impacts of climate change, to name only a few.

And I understand the impulse for us to put off hard decisions for another day, prioritize some over others, or even bury our heads in the sand. But the United Nations General Assembly is and remains the pre-eminent forum for grappling with global crises, and the United Nations is our best hope to solve them.

However, if we are to be successful we must acknowledge a reality that lies underneath so many of these challenges: we live in an interconnected world and the actions of one country or region impact the lives of people half a world away. Conflict, poverty, and disease can send refugees across borders and oceans and sometimes all the way to our shores. We can no longer escape each other. As the Secretary-General also remarked: *"We all share the same island"*.

Also consider my country's connection to the Ocean. As for so many SIDS, it is the foundation of our culture and economy and we depend on its bounty for food and income.

Yet the reckless actions of other Nations have severely undermined the marine environment that we so depend on – from excessive greenhouse gas emissions that are warming the planet and turning the seas more and more acidic, to irresponsible overfishing, to outright stealing fish in our waters, to dangerous pollution (the effects of which we have yet to fully comprehend).

All the while, some of the same countries responsible for the damage are also charged with assessing the wellbeing of the marine environment. How can we be confident that our interests will be protected? We, as a developing country, are constantly facing demands for greater transparency and accountability from the same actors who downplay and sometimes even cover up their own transgressions.

Finding lasting solutions to problems like these will require more resources and a level of cooperation that the international community has thus far not countenanced. It will also require us to look at the failings in the global order that somehow prevent countries like mine from accessing fair economic benefits of our *own* resources.

Nevertheless, we cannot just standby and do nothing. We cannot and should not wait for others to decide what is best for us. For this reason the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) are taking the lead in successfully managing their tuna

stocks, through such measures as curbing illegal fishing and sustainable harvesting.

Mr. President,

You have wisely chosen "*Delivering on and implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda*" as the theme of the General Debate of this 69th Session. It gets to the heart of the central task before us - not only fulfilling longstanding promises in sustainable development but also engendering a paradigm shift in the way we do it.

The current piecemeal approach – where a donor's political interests determine aid priorities – may treat symptoms (for a time) but it fails to address the underlying disease. If we want our efforts to be successful over the long-term we need to build a foundation that develops global citizens and gives them the tools they need to succeed in a global world.

In other words, we must move beyond "capacity building" to "institution building." What is needed is long-term *in-country* engagement backed by real resources that leaves behind durable *domestic* institutions run by nationals.

We cannot let new and emerging issues distract or diminish work on core priorities that remain inadequately addressed. We may be experiencing our own fatigue talking about overfishing, climate adaptation, and waste treatment, but these are often the areas most in need of attention.

Mr. President,

I know that tackling all of these problems will be a tall order, though however daunting it may seem, I am absolutely confident that this institution and its agencies are up to the task. We have made some progress in reducing hunger, poverty, and disease. And just this week the world watched as Leaders gathered at the United Nations Climate Summit to announce the actions their countries and corporations are planning to lower greenhouse gas emissions responsible for the climate crisis. The Summit provided hope that, at least in some corners, serious climate action is imminent however, it was hard to ignore the fact that most announcements were about the greenhouse gas reductions that would occur under some future government a decade or more in the future.

What's more, SIDS, who contribute only a fraction of global emissions, have undertaken to build sustainable economies and some of the most ambitious pledges to cut emissions. For example, we are working closely with IRENA through their Lighthouses initiative to achieve our own goal of 50% in 2020.

And my own regional group, the Pacific SIDS, led the UNGA to formally recognize the connection between climate change and international peace and

security in 2009 and helped convince the Security Council to do the same in 2011.

But while few countries doubt the correlation of climate change and conflict today, and despite graphic examples of such in the past few years alone, there is still disagreement as to the way forward.

Therefore we are still of the opinion that the Secretary-General should appoint a Special Representative on Climate and Security to analyze the projected security impacts of the crisis. In addition, the Secretary-General should lead a joint task force of all relevant organs and specialized agencies to assess the capacity of the United Nations system to respond. This is the least we can do as an international body to prepare for one of the biggest challenges of our generation.

Mr. President,

For the Security Council to remain relevant it must be adaptive enough to meet the latest threats, and climate change is a clear and present danger that we ignore at our own peril.

The Security Council must also reflect new geopolitical realities by becoming more representative and inclusive. It is for this reason that Nauru supports reform of the Security Council by enlarging its permanent and non-permanent categories and making its working methods more efficient. New members should be more geographically diverse, but they must also be willing to broaden their vision beyond a narrow focus on domestic interests to include a commitment to the common good of all Member States.

Similarly, the United Nations should ensure that all citizens of the world have the opportunity to participate in its activities. It must work for the 10,000 people in Nauru and other small countries, and nor can it continue to ignore the 24 million people in Taiwan, who time and again have demonstrated a commitment to peace and regional cooperation. Nauru is pleased to note that with the solid international support and the cross-strait rapprochement, the Republic of China has increased its meaningful participation in UN specialized agencies and mechanisms. We continue to encourage the positive interaction between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in the international arena. Furthermore, I would like to recognize the contributions that Taiwan has made to help my country make progress towards its National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS).

I take this opportunity to also express my country's deep appreciation to our friends and partners who continue to support our sustainable development priorities including; Australia, Russia, New Zealand, European Union, Cuba, Israel and Turkey to mention a few.

Mr. President,

The world is rapidly changing and these new realities have strained the United Nations' ability to respond adequately. Long-term solutions will require a new commitment to providing adequate means of implementation. On climate change alone we are far from the goal of US\$100 billion a year by 2020 to help nations adapt to climate impacts that are now unavoidable and to build sources of clean energy, to say nothing of the 0.7% GDP goal for development aid.

I know that we as an international community face numerous crises on many fronts and that much is being asked of us. But I strongly believe that it is in times like these that solutions to even the most intractable problems emerge from the human spirit. It is in times like these that light emerges from darkness; hope from despair. Small Island Developing States have laid out a vision to help us reach our full potential. I invite our partners to invest in our peoples and we will build a better and more secure world. The United Nations remains our best hope for people everywhere to live in peace and prosperity. My faith in it has never been stronger.

God bless the Republic of Nauru and God bless the United Nations.

Thank you.