



Tuvalu Statement
at the Mauritius International Meeting on the
Ten Year Review of the UN Programme of Action for the
Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Delivered by
the Honourable Maatia Toafa
Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
Port Louis, Mauritius

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Check Against Delivery

His Excellency Prime Minister Paul Raymond Berenger
President of the International Meeting
Distinguished Heads of Government, Honourable Ministers
Secretary General of the International Meeting
Excellencies and Delegates

Tuvalu congratulates you, Mr President, on your election, and thanks the people and Government of Mauritius for the magnificent preparations, and the warm hospitality they are extending to us in this international meeting.

As we meet and enjoy the warmth of Mauritius, we cannot but continue to feel the extraordinary pain inflicted upon the families and communities of this region by the recent disaster. I wish on behalf of Tuvalu to express our deepest sympathy and condolences to those whose lives have been devastated by this most horrendous disaster, including our own SIDS brothers and sisters in the Maldives.

In the same vein we also reiterate our sympathy to those in the Caribbean and our own Pacific still recovering from the shocking devastations following tropical cyclones and hurricanes during the past year.

Mr President

We are gathered here in this beautiful island not to craft a new SIDS canoe. The Barbados Programme of Action remains the solid framework vessel for addressing the problems challenging the small island developing States. Our task, rather, is to seek for a new charter based on firm political commitment for practical actions through which the visions of Barbados for SIDS can be safely and abundantly reached as we continue to also paddle through new emerging winds and waters of globalization.

We are to ask as to why there have been serious shortfalls in the implementation of the BPOA in the past ten years, and how can we as the international community fill the gaps and make a real difference in promoting the well-being of the peoples in SIDS, and improving their capacity to better cope with the challenges presented by their special case.

Mr President

The past ten years have seen remarkable leaps and advances in economic and technological performances including in ICT world-over. Yet for Tuvalu like all SIDS, our inherent social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities persist, worsened by our lack of capacity to deal with the global impacts of events caused from outside and beyond the SIDS control.

The impacts particularly of climate change and sea level rise, the HIV/AIDS endemic, the fast diminishing level of ODA, and increased marginalization as result of new trade arrangements most of which are simply of no practical relevance to. These impacts are beyond the control of SIDS like Tuvalu, and are seriously bottlenecking the achievement of sustainable development.

While Tuvalu is deeply appreciative of the goodwill and support from its traditional development partners, the shocking devastations on the Maldives, a SIDS which was recently graduated from the LDCs listing, should serve as a further unfortunate reminder of the urgent need for the international community to better recognize and appreciate the reality of the SIDS vulnerabilities. We strongly feel the international community must seriously take heed of the recent lessons learnt, and commit urgent and practical actions to build greater resilience and preparedness of SIDS.

Mr President

Tuvalu is already suffering from the impacts of climate change and sea level rise, and we are uncertain of the future of our atoll nation. Tuvalu therefore welcomes with great feelings of appreciation the positive leadership of those in the world providing for the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol next month. However, urgent actions on adaptation to climate change and mitigation by all countries are imperative now and in the future. Unless the issue of climate change is addressed, the sustainable development and survival of our peoples in SIDS will be severely undermined.

Tuvalu, like other atoll states has among the most limited and highly threatened biodiversity on Earth. Because of our high dependence on our island and marine biodiversity for almost all development Tuvalu is very committed to the CBD and the conservation and sustainable use of this fragile inheritance for our children and their children.

Mr President

In view of the above concerns, we undertook last year a comprehensive assessment of our development priorities covering all sectors of the country culminating in the holding of the National Summit on Sustainable Development which adopted a comprehensive sustainable development strategy, the Vision 2015 — Kakeega II. The strategy identified that sustainable development for Tuvalu will be dependent on the following priorities:

1. Adopting and promoting good governance;
2. Ensuring macroeconomic stability and economic growth;
3. Improving the quality of life for every Tuvaluan;
4. Ensuring the equitable development of all Islands;
5. Providing an enabling environment for employment and private sector development;
6. Strengthening capacity through the development of human resources and quality education;
7. Ensuring sustainable management and conservation of Tuvalu's natural resources and protection of the environment; and,
8. Providing adequate infrastructure and support services to underpin development.

And fundamental to all these is the provision of adequate financial and technical assistance to address the special case of SIDS.

In conclusion, Tuvalu has attached significant importance to this review process of the BPOA since its first inception. We have come, and traveled a long way both in number and in a representative manner. This is our statement of hope that out of the greenery and scenic Mauritius there will emerge practical outcomes that will make a real difference on the ground for the women, children and men in Tuvalu, and for all SIDS.

The BPOA needs a renewed political charter from here, if the SIDS canoe is ever to catch up and remain above waters.

TUVALU MO TE ATUA

Thank you
