



Statement
by
His Excellency, The Honourable MAATIA TOAFA
Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
of Tuvalu at the
Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly

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Mr President
Mr Secretary General
Excellencies

The people of Tuvalu, on whose behalf I have the honour to speak, join me in extending our warmest congratulations to the United Nations on the occasion of its 60th Anniversary.

I wish to put on records our profound gratitude to every single Member of this Great Body for the UN's immense achievements. The world based on the United Nations' noble values and principles, has indeed ensured even the small, and isolated nations such as Tuvalu to enjoy the goals of self-determination and statehood, with dignity and hope. We are proud to be a *member of* this great Family of Nations.

We also wish to join others in congratulating you, Mr President, on your election to the Presidency, and to assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Mr. President

Last week the world, our families and our children, heard from us. That the time for stating principles and defining problems and actions on the complex challenges of development, security and human rights has long passed. It is now time to deliver actions.

But how the rhetoric gets translated into actions to improve the standards of living for each nation, and for our families, women and children in our communities and villages in an equitable and fair manner, is now the main challenge. The United Nations must play the central role in managing this process.

Tuvalu is greatly encouraged by the prevailing goodwill to fulfill the many international targets on development. The commitments made especially by the European Union and others to meet the UN target of 0.7% of GNP for ODA is most welcome. We also welcome new and innovative initiatives on financing and good governance including the Global Democracy Fund, the French initiative and others. The USA's commitment to its Millennium Challenge Account initiative is also most welcome.

As a small island developing State (SIDS) and also a least developed country (LDC), which has consistently taken prudent and responsible approach to our own national development, Tuvalu is most encouraged in particular by the renewed recognition by the international community of the special vulnerabilities of small island developing States, and of the needs of LDCs, and the imperative to address them.

Increased international cooperation to ensure the full and effective implementation of the **Mauritius Strategy for SIDS** and **the Brussels Programme of Action**, particularly with regards to the provisions of adequate financing, capacity building and technology development and transfer is critical to supporting poverty reduction and sustainable development efforts of the LDCs and SIDS like Tuvalu.

There is now the clear need to establish clear vessels of connectivity from international commitments to national strategies, plans and actions on the grounds.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce the launching last Friday here in New York of the *Kakeega II* or the Tuvalu National Sustainable Development Strategies 2005-2015 — a commitment of action between the Government and all stakeholders including NGOs, and island communities.

We sincerely appreciate the support of friends in New York, bilateral partners and UN agencies and we look forward to working closely with the international community in advancing appropriate partnerships out of these Strategies. In the same vein, the important role played by regional bodies, especially those of our own in the Pacific like the CROP agencies, in supporting national efforts ought to be given recognition and support. We therefore strongly support the remarks by Samoa and Papua New Guinea on the importance of regional arrangements such as the Pacific Plan.

Mr President

Security challenges continue to create worldwide havoc, fear and uncertainty. Terrorist acts world over, including *the* recent bombings *in* London and elsewhere, have proven the continued existence of forces bent on undermining the United Nations founding goals of freedom, peace and security. They have also underscored the urgency with which we, the United Nations, must collectively combat these forces.

Tuvalu is fully committed to joining the fight against international terrorism as required by Security Council resolutions. But we would need to seek the assistance of the UN and the international community to help us fulfill the requirements, particularly on reporting, of these resolutions and of the international anti-terrorism conventions.

Mr President

The threat of impacts of climate change, sea level rise, and variability on the entire global environment continues to be a matter of serious security concern to all. For small island and low-lying coastal countries like Tuvalu the situation is devastating, threatening lives, human rights and our long term survival. The impacts are real and already happening. They demand urgent actions by the international community. As correctly underscored by the Secretary General in his report 'In Larger Freedom', "without action, SIDS will pay a bitter price for the actions of others". There cannot be a more true assertion.

Whilst we are all deeply touched by the human loss and destructions suffered following the hit by Hurricane Katrina in the USA Gulf Coast three weeks ago, the world will be better advised to take these warnings as timely, and ought to be taken seriously. Tuvalu strongly believes we must urgently address adaptation and mitigation actions against climate change, in line with the UNFCCC objective and the Kyoto Protocol targets to reduce greenhouse gasses and advance the development of and use of renewable sources of energy.

On the latter it will be remiss of Tuvalu to once again acknowledge with sincerity the coming into force of the Kyoto Protocol early this year, and to urge all industrialized countries who have not done so to ratify it as soon as possible. Not to do so will be to sign on Tuvalu's death warrant.

Time is also due to initiate dialogue for a more comprehensive approach for future actions against climate change where all major emitters of greenhouse gasses will need to participate. The Montreal COP11 in November must advance decisions on critical issues on future actions against climate change.

Unless actions are taken seriously, all efforts for development, security and human rights for those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change will be severely compromised. We appeal to those with the capacity to do so, to have a heart for islands like Tuvalu and the rest of mankind.

On enhancing the relevancy and the role of the United Nations, we would like to reiterate our strong support to the reforms for the United Nations in particular the expansion of the permanent membership and working methods of the Security Council. **In** this vein we also reiterate our support to the consideration of Japan, Germany, India and Brazil to the permanent seats of the expanded Council. We strongly feel the momentum so far achieved on the issue must be taken advantage of to finally resolve the proposed reforms at the latest by end December 2005.

We also believe more equitable representation of the developing countries in the non-permanent seats of the Council is vital and long overdue.

Mr President

Tuvalu recognizes the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic to the social and economic development and security of Tuvalu and other Pacific Island countries. Given our exposure and the level of mobility of our communities, particularly our seafarers who serve on merchant ships worldwide, there is an urgent need for assistance from the international community, such as that provided under the Global Fund on HIV/AIDS to help us raise awareness in Tuvalu to combat the threats of the epidemic. We need technical and financial assistance for these efforts.

In terms of natural resources, Tuvalu is really a BIG OCEAN small island country. The Pacific Ocean that surrounds our islands provides the vital source of our livelihoods and economic and social development. Increasingly, however, we are becoming concerned with the real threats of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and of pollution to the oceans from waste, particularly the transshipment of highly radioactive and toxic materials in our region. We would need to seek the understanding of the international community to help us save our oceans, and support fully the Pacific Islands Region^{a1} Ocean Policy adopted by leaders in 2002.

An important source of financial flows to developing countries, particularly also to SIDS like Tuvalu, is the migrant workers' remittances from developed countries. Indeed remittances from our overseas workers and particularly Tuvalu= seafarers serving abroad provide a substantive source of income so vital for social and economic development in Tuvalu.

Tuvalu fully supports the affording of urgent attention to the issue of migrant workers' rights including the maintenance of competency on international standards, and their safety and security on the international agenda, to ensure sustaining this

vital source of capital for SIDS.

Mr President

An issue of continuing concerns to Tuvalu is the question of the representation in the United Nations. Regrettably, this august body cannot be said to be universal without the rightful representation of the twenty-three million people of the ROC on Taiwan. Tuvalu feels that recognizing the political and democratic developments in Taiwan, the active and responsible participation of Taiwan in world affairs especially in trade, commerce, health, and international development without representation in the UN is unjust and morally wrong. It needs to be corrected. We seek proper review by the UN of this important issue, as well as the escalation of tension in the Taiwan Strait following the enactment by the PRC of the "Anti-Session Law".

Mr President

In conclusion, we want to reiterate that efforts aimed at the sustainable development of small island developing States like Tuvalu, will be of no meaning unless the issue of climate change and sea level is addressed decisively, and with urgency. Tuvalu's interest is not self-serving. The more serious consequences of not acting now on climate change, as we are already witnessing world over, will be felt everywhere.

It is our hope that out of this Common House of our UN family, there will emerge better understanding and goodwill for the long lasting security and survival of Tuvalu and of the whole world.

God Bless the United Nations.

TUVALU MO TE ATUA.
