



**OPENING STATEMENT BY SOLOMON ISLANDS MINISTER OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL TRADE, HON. JEREMIAH MANELE, FOR SESSION 2  
OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REVIEW MEETING ON THE IPOA PREPARING FOR UN  
5<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE ON LDCs, 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2021**

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- Excellencies
- Distinguished delegates

A very good morning and good evening to you all participating both in person and virtually at this second session at this Asia-Pacific Regional Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in Preparation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

It gives me great pleasure to deliver a few opening remarks at this session appropriately titled "Supporting our Climate, Recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic, and building a resilient society against future shocks."

COVID-19 was a term that was barely known last year; however, it would go on to become the deadliest pandemic we would witness in this very age. Rapidly overtime, it would begin to spread from a single person, to millions in all corners of the globe. According to the World Health Organisation statistics, as of 30 August 2021, there have been over 200 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 4.5 million deaths worldwide.

Border closures became necessary, and disruptions to global trade and economy was felt worldwide. It not only infected people but also tested the public health systems of countries, and further also impacted on cultures and social relations within and between countries.

The economies and the development aspirations of Least Developing Countries including Solomon Islands have been and continue to be severely tested. According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the economic loss due to the shutdown of global tourism alone is anticipated to around 4 trillion US dollars. The overall cost to

the global economy is definitely much more than that and this trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

However, prior to the global pandemic of COVID19, LDCs had already begun to feel the impact of climate change.

Rising greenhouse gas emissions over the last ten decades have resulted in degraded land fertility, lowered agricultural production, and reduced biodiversity. The ocean acidification is causing deterioration in the health of the marine ecosystem and continues to threaten food security and economic viability. Increased frequency of extreme weather events are damaging our limited infrastructure and posing health hazards for our populations. This makes rebuilding a very costly exercise especially when it has to take place three or four times a year. These climate change effects combined, which are caused by greenhouse gas emissions pose grave threat to every aspect of peoples very existence.

Given the slow onset of these effects, it may have been a lot less concerning given that it has not as yet caused loss of life as much as COVID19 has. However, it is this complacent attitude that will most certainly make climate change an even more deadly phenomenon. Climate change is the gravest threat to the sustainable livelihoods, wellbeing, viability, security, and sovereignty of LDCs particularly Small Island Developing States.

The latest UN report as the UN Secretary General puts it, 'the world is on red alert'. When the Paris Agreement was agreed to five years ago, global temperature was at 1.1 degrees Celsius. Today it is now at 1.2 degrees Celsius and it most certainly will increase due to current lack of substantive action to counter this. Low ambition of commitments under the Paris Agreement creates an uncertain future for the LDCs and the rest of the world. Stronger mitigation action under the Paris Agreement is needed in order to the world on a below 1.5 degree pathway.

Excellencies and Distinguished delegates,

COP26 overarching priorities are closing the Paris Agreement work programme, in other words conclude the Paris Rulebook and secondly to fully operationalize the Paris Agreement.

Current low ambition under the Paris Agreement, common time frame of the NDC is needed. Markets and non-market negotiations needs to be concluded. Loss and Damage to be operationalized. Support for the Warsaw Mechanism. Adaptation Fund should serve and support the Paris Agreement.

The planet that we call home requires greater action and higher ambition in order to remain a home for the generations that will come after us. This will require collective action from all of us to address the myriad of challenges that lay before us. It is therefore my hope that our interaction discussions today will allow us to come up with these solutions and inspire the transformative change we need to protect our people and our planet.

I thank you