



TUVALU

Statement

by

**His Excellency Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga
Ambassador /Permanent Representative of Tuvalu
to the United Nations
Chairman of Delegation
at the
61st United Nations General Assembly
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(Check Against Delivery)

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Madam President,

1. All has been said, all has been noted. But while it may be true that many boats will rise with the tide, others are bound to sink unless goodwill in this august body prevails. Tuvalu wishes to add its voice of solidarity to the work of the United Nations, and to what has been a highly enriching debate.

2. First, we sincerely share the high commendations already expressed on your election (H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashied Al Kalifa), as President and on the sterling efforts of the outgoing President of the General Assembly. You, Madam President, have our full cooperation in your tenure of office.

3. We also wish to join others before us in paying tribute to the work of the Secretary General. Mr Kofi Annan's initiatives on development, security and human rights have taken the United Nations ever closer to all peoples, and made the UN reachable even by small island States such as Tuvalu. In appreciation, we wish him the Best in the future.

Madam President

4. Joining the United Nations at the dawn of the new century for my small island nation is a statement of hope. Hope that by the noble ideals and principles of this Great Body, and despite our physical remoteness and insignificance, Tuvalu will be allowed to paddle its canoe in harmony along with super-tankers and share the common future of a world of larger freedom: a world in which every State regardless of its size is recognized of its sovereignty, independence and human rights.

5. We continue to hold dear to this hope. But in the present world of interdependency where great opportunities are also confronted by great challenges, the need has never been so urgent for collective action and multilateral cooperation. Victory over these challenges cannot be won through political fragmentation nor can it be advanced through finger pointing and confrontation, but through cooperation.

6. The showdown of words in this chamber by some countries is unfortunate. We must never forget that with wealth and power comes responsibility to others. The risks of this House of humanity falling apart for lack of responsibility and leadership are high. There is a call for a consistent display by all of the highest morality, solidarity and respect to each other's values and concerns. UN's ideals cannot be served otherwise.

7. As a small peace loving nation, Tuvalu strongly believes that open dialogue and working together in mutual understanding under the frameworks of the United Nations is the only way to reaching our shared destiny in diversity and in respect to one another.

Madam President

8. Tuvalu takes pride in having been part of the United Nations in the achievement of its reforms and development agenda. The adoption and operation of the Human Rights Council, Peace Building Commission, and major innovations in the Secretariat shows the benefit of working together. They must be supported to ensure peace and the protection of human rights of all peoples and communities.

9. But our work remains unfinished until we make the Security Council and its operational methodologies truly representational of the UN membership. To this end we support the G-4 resolution on the Security Council expansion, and the consideration of Japan, Germany, Brazil and India for permanent seats in the expanded Security Council.

Madam President

10. Development, security and human rights are the cardinal purposes of the United Nations. Their achievement demands of us collective responsibility and united action, a balanced approach as all are interconnected.

11. The successful conclusion of the Leaders Summit last year re-affirmed our resolve to fight poverty and ensure sustainable development through the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Mauritius Strategy on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

12. But devising plans without the availing of adequate resources is akin to prescribing a menu to the hunger – mouth watering but without the ingredients they will remain unattainable. As in the Secretary General's report to this General Assembly, *Meeting the Challenges of a Changing World*, the year of 2006 must be about implementation. The full implementation of the Mauritius Strategy through integration into the work programmes of the Commission of Sustainable Development, UN agencies, Conventions especially the Rio Conventions, and bilateral cooperation is fundamental. Additionally, the strengthening of the UNDESA coordination capacity with adequate resources in these regards is imperative.

13. Two weeks ago saw in this very Chamber the mid-term review of the Brussels Plan of Action for the Least Developed Countries. We, as both an LDC and a small island developing State, are grateful to the High Representative for the LDC, Landlocked and Small Island Developing States for his dedicated work, and to the development partners for the support Tuvalu has enjoyed over the years.

14. It is certainly our view, however, that listing Tuvalu and our Pacific LDC colleagues who are also SIDS for graduation is unrealistic and premature. We strongly feel thorough consideration of our unique economic vulnerabilities should be done on the basis of in-country but not merely through desk data analysis half the globe away, before any graduation can be recommended. For these very reasons and the achieving of the MDGs that a UN presence in Pacific SIDS is urgently needed, as has been proposed.

15. Last month a new Government was elected to power in Tuvalu, and has pledged 'good governance' and 'media freedom' as its guiding principles. It has also adopted the Tuvalu Sustainable Development Strategy known as *'Te Kakeega II: Vision 2015'*, as its framework for the implementation of partnerships, and looks forward to working with the rest of the world in the implementation of the Strategy.

Madam President

16. Security challenges continue to create worldwide havoc, fear and uncertainty. Tuvalu strongly deplores acts of terrorism in all its forms and expressions. We in the Pacific are not immune from these acts. We must collectively continue the strongest

campaign against these forces, and be resolute in ensuring effective global anti-terrorism action.

17. We also encourage the United Nation's continuing role in advancing the solution to the Palestinian question, and in ensuring peace to the people of Afghanistan, Darfur in Sudan, Timor Leste and other regions.

18. Clearly the United Nations has done well in preventing and resolving deadly conflicts in the world. But despite these achievements, the non-representation of Taiwan in the United Nations and its agencies remains an issue of great concern. The threats to Taiwan by China's deployment of missiles aimed at Taiwan in the Taiwan Strait are real, for east Asian/Pacific region and for the whole world. We urge for immediate peaceful and preventive actions in the Taiwan Strait for the sake of all.

19. More ironically we are also concerned that not only is the representation of Taiwan being opposed in the UN, our sovereign rights to raise and discuss the issue in the General Committee and the UN are also being denied. With due respect, Your Excellency, we appeal for the proper treatment and inclusion of the issue of the participation of Taiwan on the UN and threats of force on the UN agenda for proper consideration.

Madam President

20. No other challenge to global security is more serious and threatening than the impacts of climate change. Climate change is a global problem, it can only be resolved through global collective action. Addressing climate change therefore must be placed at the centre of the United Nations work.

21. As is well acknowledged, small island developing States like Tuvalu are extremely vulnerable to the impacts climate change and sea level rise, and already the evidence of devastations is prevalent in all regions of SIDS. Over the past few years, Tuvalu has witnessed unusual flooding of main islands with sea-water and King Tides, and severe attacks on fresh water, vegetation, foreshores and coral reefs.

22. We are frightened, and worried. And we cannot think of another Tuvalu to move to – all by the actions of others – if nothing is done urgently and we are forced out of our islands. There is still time to act. Once again we bring to this august body an appeal for help and for real actions.

Madam President

23. We strongly believe that we have already reached a "dangerous" level of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere and that urgent action is required to accelerate the necessary responses. The options are available, what is clearly lacking is the political will. Unless climate change is addressed, all our efforts for development, security and protection of human rights will be severely undermined.

24. Clearly there is an urgency for the international community to take more aggressive action to reduce greenhouse gases. All countries, industrialized and

developing, must contribute their part, with the industrialized countries taking the lead, including through the full implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

25. To help developing countries contribute in a committed way, we need stronger incentives to promote the development and distribution of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. We need a global fund to support these efforts.

26. It is disappointing to see the continued denial and absence of enough political will from some large industrialized countries to support vulnerable countries, like small island developing States, to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We must recognize the polluter pays principle and ensure that the countries that are producing the greenhouse gas emissions pay for the damage they are causing to the vulnerable countries.

27. There is also a need to generate considerably more finances to underwrite the costs of adaptation, including international levies to generate income to boost funding for adaptation and insurance in SIDS. The mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy into the work of the UNFCCC as required under UNGA resolution 59/311 is crucial in this regard.

28. Defining the way forward on future commitments and actions on climate change needs strong political will from all countries. The upcoming COP12/MOP2 in Nairobi must come up with clear practical timetables on accelerated actions on mitigation by all, and implementation of concrete adaptation activities in vulnerable countries like SIDS. It is imperative also that SIDS and LDCs access to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) climate change resources and Conventions funds is improved. Nairobi must also decide on the governance and management arrangements for the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund to facilitate its early operation.

29. Finally, we strongly believe that the UNGA should host a Heads of Government summit as early as possible with the aim of bringing forward workable proposals, with strong high-level political endorsement, to address climate change beyond the year 2012.

Madam President

30. Our call for urgent actions on climate change is not self-serving. Tuvalu and SIDS may be the first to suffer from the impacts of climate change. But the consequences of not doing real actions now will be felt by all around the globe. We all must work together on climate change in solidarity.

31. The people of Tuvalu have full confidence in the United Nations: and its ability to ensure the achievement by ALL of its cardinal purposes of development, security and human rights. It cannot fail the world on climate change, it cannot fail our hope. Please do not let Tuvalu sink.

God Bless the UN, God Bless Tuvalu. Thank you.
