

STATEMENT BY TUVALU

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Statement by

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Mr. President, Ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to take this opportunity to thank UNCTAD for giving me the opportunity to make a presentation at the General Debate Day. Mr. President I am here today not only to represent the Government of Tuvalu but also to represent those Pacific Island countries who are absent from this very important meeting. Aside from Vanuatu, the countries missing from UNCTAD XI are Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands and Niue.

Mr President,

Tuvalu is one of the smallest economies in the world, with a population of about 10,000 people. Fish is our major trade commodity, by way of issuing licenses to overseas fishing companies, particularly companies from US, ROC, and Korea. Tuvalu recognizes the important contribution of investment and is making every effort in creating an enabling environment for Foreign Direct Investment.

We support wholeheartedly the theme of UNCTAD XI "enhancing coherence between national development strategies and the global economic process towards economic growth and development, particularly of developing countries". This theme has come in no better time for us in Tuvalu. We are holding our National Summit on Sustainable Development in the next two weeks with the aim of producing a draft National

Sustainable Development Strategy for the next fifteen years or so. In the build up to the Summit, we have adopted the principles of sustainable development. especially the wide participation of all stakeholders in formulating the major strategic outcomes at the end of the Summit. In recognizing this. the needs of Small Islands Development States must be reflected and translated to concrete action otherwise we will continue to be sidelined and marginalized and largely ignored.

I would like to call on UNCTAD to strengthen the Office of the Least Development Countries and in particular the Small Island Development States. Tuvalu and indeed the Pacific countries seek to be included in the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP). Our participation in this programme will go towards addressing our greater integration into the multilateral trading system. UNCTAD remains to be the most important Agency in terms of delivering much needed technical cooperation in activities that are truly developmental. We further call on the UNCTAD and the international community to support and monitor the graduation processes of LDC's.

Mr President, the trade concerns of my region will also be addressed at the 10 year review of the Barbados Programme of Action in Mauritius that is being scheduled for early 2005. I am looking forward to participating at this meeting and I would like to see that every effort is made to ensure the greater participation of the Pacific Island Countries. Any meaningful discussion concerning Small Island Developing States must involve the stakeholders.

Mr. President, as the Doha Development Agenda negotiations continue to strive towards a framework by July, I must emphasize that the negotiations taking place in Geneva impacts on our small economies. We therefore would like to strongly support the Small Economies Work Prograrrin2e in accordance with Paragraph 35 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration. The issues of special and differential treatment, market access, accessions and subsidies remain to be in the fore front of our trade interest. I call on UNCTAD to extend to our region - the Pacific Region - the owner of the largest ocean of the World, the greatest possible technical assistance so as to give meaning and integrity to Paragraph 35.

I would like also Mr. President to draw the attention of the international community to the great importance of the fisheries sector to the Pacific Islands. The state of play in the multilateral level on fisheries is expected to fundamentally change the current situation in terms of exports and market access. The current Doha Development Agenda negotiations on Paragraph 28 and 31 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration being discussed in the Rules of Origin Committee and the Committee on Trade and Environment are expected to impact on our lives irretrievably. I call on the member states to seriously consider the plight of small island developing states who are dependent on the fisheries sector in their negotiations.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen as Small Island Developing States or SIDS as we are commonly known in the UN and as a result of our smallness, persistent structural difficulties we face enormous difficulties in integrating into the global economy. SIDS face challenges as well as opportunities from globalization but have limited capacities to

adapt. The potential benefits to SIDS from globalization and trade liberalization will be severely constrained unless our limitations and vulnerabilities are fully recognized and addressed in a meaningful and relevant way by the international community at large. We also recognize the special needs and vulnerabilities of other group of countries but the intensity of our vulnerabilities is indeed much higher.

Mr. President, I sincerely hope that UNCTAD XI will not become another forum that recommends further analysis and researches, but rather one that will promise tangible outcomes for SIDS in the face of this globalization process. And of course, I like to feel that as a member of UNCTAD, we are indeed able to reap the associated benefits especially when we are an LDC.

Thank you for your attention.