

**Statement by High Commissioner of India Mr. Vishvas Sapkal  
at the 30<sup>th</sup> Forum Dialogue Partners Session  
at the 49<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum, Nauru**

**Mr. Chairman, Director General of PIF, Excellencies, Leaders of the Forum  
Member Governments and Post Forum Dialogue Partners**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Ekamowir omo**, Good Afternoon and **Namaste** to you all.

It is my good fortune to return to the beautiful shores of Nauru third time this year. Thank you, Your Excellency, President Waqa for your warm welcome and wonderful hospitality. It is an honour for me to address this august gathering of leaders from the Pacific and to represent the Republic of India in the Post Forum Dialogue at this very important platform. I would like to congratulate Your Excellency, President Waqa, the Government and the friendly people of Nauru for successfully hosting the Summit. I thank your entire team for your efforts for making our stay comfortable in Nauru.

2. The theme of this intervention is '**Climate Change as a Security Risk, and the Need for Greater Global Action**'. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Tuvalu His Excellency Mr. Enele Sopoaga has already spoken on the subject and elaborated regional action to address this and Pacific priorities to drive greater global action.

3. Under the umbrella of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), India has been partnering with governments in the region to assist as much as possible both on the mitigation as well as on the adaptation aspects of our strategy against Climate Change. There is a wide range of areas where we are partnering with you but today I would like to dwell upon the specific projects aimed at dealing with the challenges posed by Climate Change.

4. It is obvious that there cannot be a greater security risk than the risk posed by Climate Change which threatens not only the very existence of vulnerable Pacific Islands Countries but the whole plant earth. It threatens the livelihoods of communities and poses multiple challenges throughout the Pacific, and indeed all over the world.

5. Among the most important projects of the Government of India aimed at combating Climate Change and promoting renewable energy is the International Solar Alliance (ISA) which was launched jointly by India and France in November 2016. One of the major milestones achieved during last year in the field of

promoting solar energy was coming into force of the Framework Agreement of the ISA in September. Nauru, Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu, Papa New Guinea and Vanuatu from the Pacific Island Countries became the Full Members of the ISA with voting rights. I am glad to share that all of them have also ratified and deposited their Instruments of Ratification with the Government of India. In March this year, the ISA Founding Conference and Solar Summit were held successfully in New Delhi, we received encouraging participation and support by Hon'ble President of Nauru, Prime Ministers of Fiji, Tuvalu and Vanuatu along with Ministerial delegations of Kiribati, Tonga and Papua New Guinea in the Conference. We now look forward to the first ISA General Assembly in New Delhi in October 2018. It is our intention to spread this wonderful initiative to all the 121 prospective member countries so we welcome new members to the Alliance.

6. Staying on the topic of harnessing solar energy, I would like to update you on the progress of a very important project of the Government of India for the 14 Pacific Island Countries. India has undertaken the project of 'Solar Electrification of 2800 houses in all the 14 Pacific Island Countries'. Total 70 Solar Mamas from all 14 Pacific Island Countries finished their training till September 2017. This is a unique project, which not only fights climate change and helps harnessing solar energy, but also focuses on woman empowerment.

7. We are working with our partners in the region on projects aimed at Climate Change adaptation and fostering sustainable development. As a big impetus to this effort India provided a grant assistance for solar efficient lighting of the urban District of South Tarawa of Kiribati in December 2017. The project will help Kiribati save precious resources in energy savings by switching to solar powered lighting. The project will help reduce these communities' dependence on kerosene lanterns and will also promote opportunities for school children by providing access to electricity to study at night. Improving energy efficiency is a key element of fostering sustainable development. To this end, India provided grant assistance to Vanuatu in January 2018 for procuring LED bulbs and energy efficient equipment. Again, this will lead to huge energy savings for Vanuatu.

8. Protection of vulnerable communities from sea-level rise is also one of the important focus areas for us. Therefore, India funded construction of Seawall at the Anetan District of Nauru which was completed last year and inaugurated in January 2018. The Seawall will protect the communities in this district from adverse effects of sea-level rise and coastal erosion. India is keen to support similar projects elsewhere as well.

9. Last year, India established the India-UN Development Partnership Fund at

the United Nations in New York. A Commonwealth window to the Fund was added this year during the CHOGM Summit. India will provide a total of \$150 million for development partnerships under the Fund and its window during the next 10 years. The Fund has established a vibrant development partnership with the PIF countries. More than US\$ 5.69 million have been committed in 12 countries for 11 projects. First project of the Fund was from 7 Pacific Island countries (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga). The project aims to strengthen climate early warning systems in these countries. Other projects of the Fund are being undertaken in the following partner countries: Papua New Guinea, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. We are also happy to be working with Nauru, the Chair of the 49<sup>th</sup> PIF, on a project on Establishment of 'Waste to Compost' Facility at an estimated cost of US\$ 1 million. Two projects in Fiji and Kiribati are also supported from the India Brazil South Africa Fund for Poverty Alleviation also known as the IBSA Fund.

10. Promotion of sustainable agriculture, generation of employment and supporting key sectors of economic growth has also been an important aspect of our development cooperation. India has continued its support to the Fijian SME sector through financial grant which was disbursed during 2017. Under the second phase, disbursement is underway. This will fulfil an important commitment given by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India His Excellency Mr. Narendra Modi. India is also committed to supporting the Government of Fiji's plan for revival of Fijian sugar industry. In partnership with Government of Fiji, we are also looking at ways to revive the Fijian railway network.

11. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief has also been a focus area for our development partnership, be it the assistance in the aftermath of the Tropical Cyclone Winston in Fiji or Tropical Cyclone Gita in Tonga or the mass displacement of populations due to volcanic eruptions in Ambae Islands of Vanuatu; we are committed to stand shoulder to shoulder with our partners in the Pacific during testing times.

12. Friends! Sustainable lifestyles are an integral part of promoting sustainable development and promoting good health is part and parcel of doing that. India is committed to promote sustainable lifestyles and combat Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) through Yoga and Ayurveda. We are also thankful to all the countries for supporting celebrations of International Day of Yoga to fight the NCDs. India is committed to train yoga trainers from the Pacific Island Countries. We have also been holding health awareness campaigns with Indian doctors providing free health screening. India is today a preferred destination for medical tourism.

13. India has been raising its voice at all important forums for greater global action on Climate Change – be it the Paris Agreement, COP23 or important economic forums such as World Economic Forum. I would like to borrow from Hon'ble Prime Minister Modi's famous remarks at the Davos 2018. Prime Minister had said that, ***“In our culture, we treat the Nature as mother. We also believe that man only has the right to milk it; not to destroy it. That is why, through Paris Agreement, we have assured the global community that our development process would be entirely in line with our cultural ethos towards environmental safeguards. In fact, we are not only aware of our responsibilities towards climate change; we are willing to take lead in mitigating its effects.*”**

***To demonstrate sustainability of our development process, we have made major commitments and achievements in renewable energy. We have planned to draw 175 GW of energy from renewables by 2022. This includes 100 GW from Solar Energy and another 75 GW from Wind and other sources. We have added more than 14 GW to solar energy generation which was just about 3 GW three years back. With this, we are already the fifth largest producer of solar energy in the world. Not only this, we are also the sixth largest producer of renewable energy.”***

14. Environmental sustainability, which involves both intra-generational and inter-generational equity, has been the approach of Indians for very long. Much before the Climate Change debate began, Mahatma Gandhi, regarded as the father of our nation had said that we should act as ‘trustees’ and use natural resources wisely as it is our moral responsibility to ensure that we bequeath to the future generations a healthy planet. We will be celebrating 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi next month and it would be a befitting tribute to the Mahatma if we all pledge to contribute to sustainable development and fight Climate Change.

15. Next Summit of the Forum will take place in Tuvalu. I would like to take this opportunity to convey our best wishes to Hon'ble Prime Minister of Tuvalu for a successful Summit next year.

Thank you!