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Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs

**Statement at the Kainaki II to COP 26 – Virtual Pacific Islands Forum High-Level Roundtable on Urgent Climate Change Action
- For Recording – Fri. 11th December, 2020 at 11 am**

Agenda item 2 - Raising Ambition on Nationally Determined Contributions and Long-Term Strategies

Fellow Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum;

Ministers and Representatives of our Forum Dialogue

Partners;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Bula Vinaka from Suva.

Five years on from COP21 and the Paris Agreement, the world is still warming at an astonishing rate. If high-polluting countries do not curtail their greenhouse gas emissions and commit to meaningful net-zero targets, we are well on track to reach 1.5 degrees by 2030, 2 degrees by 2050 and up to 5 degrees by 2100.

Some people compare the Pacific's story to that of the canary in the coal mine. In that analogy, the canary is lowered into the mine to check for dangerous gas levels — if the canary came out dead, the rest of the miners knew not to enter.

I refuse to let Fijians and our Pacific Island sisters and brothers be some sacrificial canary for coal-burning countries and high-emitting companies.

We must not stand idly by and watch the world's most vulnerable countries suffer, only to warn other wealthier nations that their own fate will soon follow. This is not just Fiji's climate emergency — it is the world's emergency. The high-emission countries simply have to face facts. We all depend on each other. Climate complacency by one will harm all others.

There is some cause for hope. The European Union has committed to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The United Kingdom, Japan and the Republic of Korea have committed to carbon neutrality by 2050. The incoming United States President has also indicated a commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050.

But we need more consistent and aggressive action across the world, and we need all nations to find ways to do more than they ever thought possible.

All parties must submit ambitious mid-century targets for achieving a net-zero global economy. That means real strategies to reduce emissions—strategies that are backed by the kinds of policy, financing and governance mechanisms that bring them to life and make them truly transformative.

COVID-19 must not delay us. Rather, we must seize the opportunity that this fateful moment gives us—to build a global economic recovery that stimulates climate-smart and inclusive sustainable development, for all people.

Fiji is committed to net-zero emissions by mid-century and we have the plans in place to achieve that aim. At the regional level, we have endorsed the ten calls of the *Kainaki II Declaration on Urgent Climate Change Action Now*, and we hold ourselves to account to all of them. Fiji is also co-leading the development of the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. So we are doing our part, as are all of you. But we are a small part of the problem.

We Pacific nations owe it to our people and to humanity as a whole to raise our voices more to demand that major emitters and wealthy countries step up their climate actions and commitments. Without this, we will lose our homes, our way of life, our well-being and our livelihoods. It is past time to get serious. We all signed the Paris Agreement. Now let's insist that we put it to work.

I urge all world Leaders to act. Act for all of us. Act for our future. Act for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you.
