



STATEMENT

by

H.E. Hon. Fanetupouvava'u Tu'ivakano
(The High Commissioner of Tonga to the United Kingdom)

at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 26th Session of the Conference of the Parties also serving as the 16th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, and the 3rd Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement.

Glasgow, Scotland, UK, Wednesday, 10 November 2021.

EMBARGO UNTIL DELIVERY

Mr. President
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. On behalf of His Majesty's Government, and the people of the Kingdom of Tonga, may I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Presidency for the **26th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**; please be assured of the full support of the Tonga delegation in the critical work that you lead during this important global climate summit.
2. I also express my sincere gratitude to the Government and People of the United Kingdom, specifically to the people of Glasgow for your warm hospitality you have accorded to us since our arrival here in your beautiful city.
3. Mr President, the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is unequivocal in its findings that humans are directly responsible for the observed changes in the climate; these changes will deteriorate with more warming, some will be

irreversible and some other effects will have existential ramifications for many of the peoples living on atolls much like the Kingdom of Tonga.

4. Survival from the impacts of Climate Change is nowhere else the most pressing concern and danger than in Small Islands Developing States, like the Kingdom of Tonga.
5. The effects of Climate Change continue to threaten the environment, land, the ocean and the marine resources, upon which, the livelihood and existence of our people, depend very much on.
6. In Tonga, we have experienced (i) the increased intensity and frequency of tropical cyclones with the 4 tropical cyclones in less than a month during our last cyclone season in February of this year (ii) over the past decade, sea level rise with an average of 6.4mm per year; (iii) while higher ocean temperature result in coral bleaching of the country's reefs; (iv) record rates of coastal erosion, overflow and flash flooding; (v) salt water intrusion affecting groundwater quality and increase soil salinization resulting in the reduction of crop yields; (vi) Drought leads to water scarcity especially the outer islands where rainwater is the only source of water; and (vii) loss of critical infrastructures, assets and habitats in coastal areas.

Mr. President,

7. The *Paris Agreement* was a first step by the global community toward ensuring the very survival, of not only my country and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), but more importantly: this planet earth that we call home.
8. We are here in Glasgow to progress our work, under this Landmark Agreement, and to stand in global solidarity urging all countries to work together to address the challenges and to accelerate actions to tackle the climate crisis.

Mr. President,

9. We find a little solace in the IPCC Report that confirms that the 1.5°C limit agreed in Paris is still within reach. Let us work together to make it a reality. We have acknowledged the efforts made by all parties that have committed to ambitious climate actions.
10. The Kingdom of Tonga is committed, to ensure rapid progression at the national level, towards implementing the necessary actions toward achieving the ambitious targets under its Second Nationally Determined Contribution and Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies.
11. Albeit our determination, the NDC Synthesis Report, and the UNEP Emissions Gap Report issued in September and October 2021 both indicate that we are not on that path of meeting the 1.5 degrees goal.
12. We strongly re-emphasize the fundamental value and critical imperative in securing the net zero emission target by 2050 and thereby limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C by the end of the century. Anything beyond the 1.5°C threshold would spell absolute catastrophe for Tonga, Pacific, the Small Island States and the world at large.
13. To meet these targets, immediate and enhanced actions must be taken now, for time waits for no woman or man.

14. We will persist to call on everyone particularly the big polluters and major emitters for ambitious emission reductions by 2030 and to implement commitments consistent with the 1.5⁰C target. Phasing out of coal plants and fossil fuel subsidies and investments are indeed crucial.
15. What matters now is action. At COP, two important sectors are absent from all of our NDCs – the international shipping and aviation sectors, but we all share a responsibility to ensure these sectors do not cause us to fail to meet our Paris Agreement goals.
16. With their GHG emissions overseen by sister UN agencies, we must work to ensure the positions that we all take here at UNFCCC are consistent with our work at the IMO and ICAO. For Tonga, a large ocean state, our focus has primarily been on shipping.
17. The solutions IMO must now adopt are a resolution at MEPC 77 in two weeks' time that shows that it is unambiguously aligned to the Paris Agreement temperature goals by elevating its ambition to zero GHG by 2050. And we must work at MEPC to secure the policy solutions that can achieve that decarbonisation – and for this purpose we strongly support the proposal of Republic of the Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands for a levy imposed on shipping's GHG emissions from 2025 at the latest.

Mr President,

18. The need to support climate adaptation measures to protect our communities and natural ecosystems is of great urgency. Tonga continues to use its National Adaptation Plan (Tonga JNAP2) to dialogue with donors and partners to secure technical and financial support to implement all of our adaptation actions for a Resilient Tonga.
19. Conduct of Technology Needs Assessment, development, and deployment of the most feasible technology for mitigation and adaptation actions in Tonga and Small Island Developing States are crucial. Capacity building is also critically needed to ensure effective and timely implementation of ambitious targets and commitments.
20. Without the necessary support we will take longer to implement concrete actions and achieve the 1.5⁰C degree goal within the given timeframe. We continue to stress and call on developed countries to keep their promise to mobilize at least \$100bn per annum in climate finance by 2020.
21. We also call on the International financial institutions to play their part in facilitating greater access to the private and public sector finance required to secure global net zero emission by 2050.
22. Loss and Damage also need dedicated funding therefore COP 26 must address the long- term consequences of insufficient climate action in this area.
23. We urge parties to complete the Paris Rulebook so that the Paris Agreement can be operationalized.

Mr President,

24. As one of many large ocean states present here in Glasgow, the notion of the climate-ocean nexus is of critical importance to us from the Pacific Island Countries. We are deeply concerned of the increased acidification of our Ocean due to increased concentration of carbon dioxide and its

devastating effects on our reef ecosystems, fish and other marine resources hence affecting the entire fisheries upon which we rely on.

25. The Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum at their 51st meeting endorsed *the Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate-Change Related Sea Level Rise*. This is an important document for it reflects our region's collective position on how UNCLOS' rules on maritime zones should apply in relation to climate change impacts such as sea level rise. It also clearly states our commitment to maintaining our maritime zones without reduction from sea level rise impacts.

Mr. President,

26. We continue to emphasize the importance of aligning the actions under the Paris Agreement with the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, Sustainable Development Goals, the SAMOA Pathway and the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone Layer for their effective implementation.

Mr. President,

27. It is with the hope, that this COP26 is a testament to the genuine partnerships and collective responsibilities of all parties, in raising their ambition and actions towards achieving the goals, of the Paris Agreement.
28. Survival of our children and future generation of our small and most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change impacts critically depend on decisions made here in Glasgow at COP26.
29. I thank you, MALO 'AUPITO.