

**SPEECH BY H.E. AHMET ERGIN,
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY IN WELLINGTON
Pacific Islands Forum 50th Session, Funafuti (16 August 2019)**

“Securing our Future in the Pacific”

*(Particular focus on driving greater global and regional action on combating Climate Change
and Protecting our Ocean)*

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I always feel privileged when I have the opportunity to address a distinguished audience from the Pacific region. Not only because I am among many friendly nations, but also due to Turkey’s progressive relations with the Pacific region over the years.

Since our admission as a Dialogue Partner in 2014, Turkey has consistently represented itself at these sessions.

I would like to thank our host, the Government of Tuvalu, for the excellent organisation of this meeting and their warm hospitality accorded to us all.

Distinguished Delegates,

Firstly, I would like to underline the importance of this session and how the concept of *“Securing our Future in the Pacific”* is one, which is highly important in Turkey and of major concern for all countries, on every continent, due to the adverse effects climate change is having on nearly all segments of our society. None of us are immune! Turkey shares the general approach that we shall remain open to cooperation, with a view to combatting these challenges, before they evolve as imminent threats to all our lives.

Statistics show that July 2019 was the hottest month, ever recorded, on Earth.

Turkey recognises that the Pacific region is one of the most affected areas of the adverse impacts of climate change and global warming. Increasing sea levels and the devastating impacts from extreme weather events pose an existential threat to all Pacific Island nations.

Turkey commends the efforts of all the Players and Parties bringing awareness, to the world, on the urgency of climate action.

Turkey and the Pacific region have many similarities and a comparable approach to believing that the oceans and seas need a shared responsibility and have shared benefits for our environments, economies and our communities.

With this understanding, Turkey supports and encourages a global and a close regional cooperation in order to mitigate the destructive effects of climate change.

Climate change has induced many challenges such as extreme weather events like, drought, cyclones, desertification, land degradation, food insecurity, water scarcity, forest fires and thus loss of biological diversity.

Turkey attaches great importance to institutional bonds with the Pacific region. A statement, which may be easy to say, but one, which is far more difficult to realise.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please note Turkey's sincerity when we say she is aware of the challenges and is therefore stepping up her efforts in the Pacific region, with emphasis on climate change and preserving our oceans and seas, knowing too well that the oceans produce at least 50% of the oxygen on our planet.

In preparing the groundwork, Turkey aims to develop a Marine Litter Strategic Action Plan to recycle 35% of its recyclable waste by 2023 in all her coastal cities. Turkey attaches an importance to conserving and sustainably protecting the use of oceans, seas and marine resources. Turkey is highly committed to ocean conservation and preventing, if not eliminating, plastic pollution.

Turkey has initiated the Zero Waste Program under the auspices of first lady Emine Erdoğan to establish a sustainable recycling economy, raise public awareness for environmental issues and keep waste under control in line with sustainable development principles.

Within the scope of the Zero Waste Program, the Zero Waste Blue Project has been initiated to protect seas and water resources in and around Turkey.

Excellencies,

Through Turkey's commitment to the UN Framework Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC), Turkey as a developing country with concrete actions and ambitions in climate action, will demonstrate good examples of becoming a source of inspiration for most of the parties to the UNFCCC.

I would like to share with you some examples Turkey has developed of various actions and projects to combat climate change;

- In light of her commitment, Turkey, as early as 2015, presented her candidacy to host COP26 in 2020 in Antalya with the understanding that COP26 would be an important opportunity to demonstrate her sincere determination to contribute to climate action
- Turkey will continue her leadership in Infrastructure, Cities and Local Climate Action and channel her best resources to ensuring the necessary actions in combating climate change

- “Climate Change Action Plan” for 2011-2023 sets the goals to mitigate Greenhouse Gas Emissions resulting from waste, buildings, agriculture, transportation, energy, industry, land use and forestry
- Submitted her 7th National Communication to the UNFCCC Secretariat, which indicated Turkey’s determination to implement and support sustainable development goals with clean technologies
- Gave priority to “Local Climate Change Action Plan” studies and prepared a Regulation for Local Climate Change Action Plan in 2019. Once this regulation enters into force, Turkey will be one of the leading countries conducting studies on climate change in the region and one of the five leading countries that possess such legislation in the world
- In compliance with the EU Environmental Acquis, on Greenhouse Gases Emission Monitoring, Turkey harmonised her national regulations on monitoring, reporting and verifying Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Adopted the “National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan” for 2011-2023 defining adaptation policies for the areas of water resources management, agriculture and food security, ecosystem services, bio-diversity and forestry, risk management of natural disasters and human health
- Implemented the project on “Enhancing Required Joint Efforts on Climate Action” co-financed with the European Union and which within that scope has seen 37 grant projects for local stakeholders such as municipalities, universities and NGOs being conducted in order to strengthen climate action at the local level and raise awareness
- Published the “Regulation on Energy Performance in Buildings” defining the rules and procedures for efficient usage of energy and energy resources and the prevention of waste in buildings. Since 2011, Turkey has issued Energy Performance certificates to approximately 900 000 buildings
- Published in 2017 the “Regulation on Green Certificate for Buildings and Settlements” setting forth procedures and principles for establishing assessment and documentation systems to reduce negative effects of buildings and settlements and to use natural resources and energy efficiently
- Between 2011-2016, Turkey achieved a 9.5% reduction in CO₂ emissions per unit of value added, in accordance with the SDG9 “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation”
- In line with these efforts to fight against climate change, Turkey is also investing in renewable energy sources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey would like to emphasise that the far-reaching, adverse effects of climate change, requires increased adaptation and resilience building and the allocation of adequate financial and technical support, for the most vulnerable countries as an integral component in effectively strategising to address climate change. A continued close regional and international cooperation with coordinated measures are indispensable.

Turkey is reiterating the importance of support mechanisms. Climate change is an existential threat for the people who live on the islands. We are aware of the risks posed by sea level rise, from global warming, especially for the small island nations.

We highlight too that the guiding principles of the climate regime are equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

These principles are meaningful only if the historical responsibilities and development levels of the countries are considered. In this regard, Turkey's status under the UNFCCC is not compatible with her development level and historical responsibility. To achieve a fair position under the UNFCCC, Turkey is striving to be a Non-Annex country of the UNFCCC. I would like to emphasise that Turkey, by no means, aims at accessing the funds allocated to the most vulnerable and the least developed countries. Turkey aims to ensure equal treatment with the countries having similar economic levels with us, both in terms of access to the means of implementation and undertaken commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Excellencies,

My remarks can be summarised as follows: as a country surrounded by seas, Turkey, is ready to cooperate with the Pacific Island states in their efforts to reach their goals.

Turkey remains committed to implementing all necessary measures to protect our planet and to overcome the climate change challenges on equal terms with the countries having similar development levels.

Thank you for your attention.