



PRIME MINISTER
Nuku'alofa
Kingdom of Tonga

Statement of Hon. Samuela 'Akilisi Pohiva
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Minister of Education and Training
At the Summit for the Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Development

New York, Saturday, 26th September 2015

Check Against Delivery

Distinguished Co-Chairs President Museveni and
Prime Minister Rasmussen
Heads of State and Government
President of the General Assembly
Secretary-General
Ladies and Gentlemen

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

I have the honour to deliver this statement for the first time in my capacity as Head of Government, on behalf of the people and the government of the Kingdom of Tonga.

And at the outset Distinguished Co-Chairs, please allow me through you, to congratulate the President of the General Assembly, for his outstanding effort in convening this Summit. And likewise, I would like to extend my congratulations and appreciation to our previous President, Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his outstanding efforts in overseeing the process that produced the outcome document that we had unanimously endorsed yesterday. Additionally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge with thanks the considerable effort made by the co-facilitators of the process, for their long hours and dedication in bringing us to this moment.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

This document is an attempt to radically shift away from "business as usual." For the first time, we had gathered to affirm a truly universal outcome, one that holds the key to a prosperous and sustainable future for us all. The universality of this agreement is a reflection of the diversity of needs it addresses, across the three dimensions of sustainable development. But the universality of the Agenda also recognizes that as the connections between us deepen, so too do the common challenges that we face. Chief among those challenges is the irreversible threat to our people, society, livelihoods, and natural environments posed by climate change. Indeed, as a small island developing State, we are particularly vulnerable to

the negative impacts of climate change, and are already experiencing its effects, including sea level rise, more frequent and extreme weather events, and ocean acidification. We know that these effects will intensify over time. While this document does recognize that we must take urgent action to combat climate change, it must be stressed that it is an imperative we must all address if we are to attain the aspirations set out today. This document reaffirms the need for the strongest possible agreement to be reached in Paris later this year, as the challenges we face as a result of climate change will only intensify as we approach 2030.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

In crafting a universal agenda, the Pacific Small Island Developing States stood at the forefront in declaring that our Oceans are central to sustainable development for all. We stressed that their conservation and sustainable use was critical to poverty eradication and sustained economic growth. And we did so knowing that mounting human impacts have come to threaten the oceans that sustain us all. We are pleased to see before us an Agenda that moves forward in addressing threats to our ocean- marine pollution, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, ocean acidification, while harnessing our marine and coastal resources for sustainable development. Our Pacific Ocean is one of the greatest natural endowments in the world, and sustains not only our island, but is an enormous component of our global environment. Careful and responsible stewardship of this asset is not merely our responsibility, but an indispensable key to the success of our Agenda. The steps we take to bring prosperity to our peoples must likewise be taken in harmony with nature.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

The Kingdom of Tonga is pleased that this Agenda also recognizes that we must meet our need for energy in a manner that is not merely affordable and reliable, but modern and sustainable.

My country is highly dependent on imported fossil fuels to meet our energy requirements, and for this reason we responded with the Tonga Energy Road Map, to not only reduce our vulnerability to energy shocks, but to increase access to modern energy in an environmentally sustainable manner. We welcome support for this, and further such steps, as detailed in this Agenda.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

We further recognize that the ambitious decisions being advanced here are only as good as the commitments we undertake in implementation. A key to the promise of this document to transform our world is the unprecedented attention to its means of implementation, found both within the Agenda itself, and through related commitments undertaken in the financing for development process. As a Pacific small island developing State, we face additional financing challenges that deserve the targeted attention provided here. We must follow through on these commitments to translate the roadmap we have put forward into concrete and tangible actions that transform the lives of those we serve.

Finally, Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Since the Millennium Declaration, Tonga has made significant strides towards the attainment of sustainable development. More must be done. As the next fifteen years dawn upon us, the challenges we face are more difficult than ever. Our aspirations are higher.

Yesterday, we listened to Leaders who spoke about poverty and no sign of hope being forthcoming. Some spoke about the forced massive exploitation of resources by multinational companies. We also heard, that in many countries in Africa, inequality had widened and poverty increased.

Similarly, we heard of the negative effects, yet positive implications, on global sustainable development, of the world's total spending of over \$1 trillion on military might.

In the Pacific, the threat of climate change, marine pollution, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and ocean acidification, still stand as real threats to the people in our region let alone our sustainable development. Others emphasized the prolonged delay in implementing the Millennium Development Goals and other commitments.

I associate with the sentiments made by Leaders, that multinational companies, their partners, and supporters, must be reminded that to refuse to act promptly, would lay them open to the perception that they are more sensitive to other interests rather than to the interests of the people. Indeed, we must remove unfair monopolies and always put justice first, before interests.

Fellow Leaders, allow me to remind us all, that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere: whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly".

The international system as is, does not adequately provide for a fair, and equitable solution for a small island developing State like Tonga, and small island developing States generally. However, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted yesterday, with its goals and targets, shines a light of hope and reflect the desire of humanity to live and enjoy a world of peace, justice, and harmony.

We entrust all states, both developing and developed, working in genuine and durable partnerships, and in a reformed United Nations fit for purpose, to ensure that these goals are met in the next 15 years.

I thank you