



***Statement delivered by His Excellency the Honourable Baron Waqa M.P.
President of the Republic of Nauru
Chair of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)***

***At Pre-COP Session 2 Plenary discussion - Making COP 23 a success: Expectations
and deliverables***

17 October 2017

The Honourable Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji and incoming President of COP23,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula and welcome to the Pacific!

It is my honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States. Allow me to begin by thanking my Pacific brother, Prime Minister Bainimarama, for his bold leadership this year on the two priorities most dear to our region – a safe climate and healthy oceans. You have shared our Pacific story, which the rest of the world must hear. You will have our full support in Bonn next month so that COP23 is a success.

We extend our sincere condolences to those recently impacted by one of the most violent Atlantic hurricane seasons on record. Words fail when surveying the devastation dealt to our island brothers and sisters in the Caribbean. But more than our words, these communities need the resources to rebuild.

I would also like to honor the passing of one of our climate heroes from the Pacific, Ambassador Tony de Brum. Another one of our great story tellers, Tony was a stalwart defender of his people, whether from the consequences of nuclear testing, or the growing impacts of climate change. He will be deeply missed.

Friends,

The Pacific loves a good party. The Pacific loves a good party, and oh did Paris deliver. Four long years in the making, no one can deny the enormity of the diplomatic achievement that took place at Le Bourget. It is true that our new treaty was a bit lacking in ambition, and the

resources required for implementation were far from certain, but celebration was justified nonetheless.

The party continued into 2016 with the UN Secretary-General's signing ceremony. Led by Fiji, *fifteen* of the seventeen countries to submit their instruments of ratification that day were small islands. We would soon learn that this was only the crest of a much larger wave of support, with entry into force secured before the year was out. Around the same time, breakthroughs in Kigali and Montreal were further evidence that momentum to finally tackle climate change was building.

But friends,

Even the best parties must eventually come to an end, and the day after is not always easy. Partnerships that seemed promising in the heat of the moment are never consummated. We wake up to the fact that some promises were made in vain. A few may even try to deny their involvement completely.

Most just simply start to forget.

Today, we have no such luxury. This is one hangover we need to cut short. At COP23, we must get back to work.

Our incoming President has presented a full set of priorities, which the Pacific SIDS fully supports. Our negotiators must make substantial progress across a number of areas to meet the 2018 deadline we have set for ourselves.

However, the work of the negotiations is only a small piece of the task before us. The hardest part, falls on many of the political decision makers in the room, who must see that our commitments are honored at home. Chief among them is the full implementation of our Nationally Determined Contributions. Each and every one of us made this promise, and we are now two years closer to the time when we will be held to account.

With regard to developing country NDCs, implementation is a collective responsibility. In submitting our NDCs, we have demonstrated our political will to be part of this global effort, but most of us lack the resources to fully implement them alone. Here, the Paris Agreement commits developed countries to provide the necessary assistance.

We applaud the work of the Climate Champions, Special Envoy Hakima El Haite and Minister Inia Seruiratu, who have a special responsibility in this endeavour. Catalyzing the partnerships and initiatives necessary for action must become a central focus of our work.

Such must be the dual objectives of the Conference of Parties moving forward: progressing swiftly in the technical negotiations, while building strong political momentum and partnerships towards the full implementation of NDCs.

At the same time, we must not forget that the victims of climate change have had very little to celebrate. They are feeling the extreme impacts now. A fully operational mechanism to address Loss and Damage is absolutely essential. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that no country or community is left behind.

My friends,

Do not let the beauty of the environs deceive. Time is not on our side. Just twenty (20) months ago, this very island faced winds of nearly two hundred and eighty (280) kilometers per hour as Cyclone Winston made landfall. Welcome to the Pacific – the frontlines of climate change.

The fourteen countries in my group were quick to ratify because the Paris Agreement may truly be our last chance to preserve some measure of safety for our people. No one appreciates this more than the Honourable Prime Minister, which is why I know Fiji will bring this same sense of hope and of urgency to their Presidency. I ask all of you to do the same.

Thank you and God bless you all.