

The Honourable Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Omo yoran.

It is a pleasure to join you all today for the Climate Action Pacific Partnership Conference.

At the outset, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the people of Fiji for welcoming us to their beautiful country.

I would also like to recognize the leadership of our gracious host, the Honourable Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, who has been working hard to raise the prominence of our region on the international stage. After chairing the Group of 77 and China and co-hosting the UN Oceans Conference, and now holding the Presidency of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC, Fiji has made sure that the voice of the Pacific has never been stronger.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For many years, the Pacific SIDS have been sounding the alarm about the negative impacts of climate change. Our global perspective on the need for concerted action by all nations, has been informed by a unique and eminently local experience. We have long understood the vulnerability of human settlements and fragile ecosystems to extreme events, and we must now bear witness to the dangerous impacts of climate change that are already happening.

Our contribution to the international community should not be understated. The Pacific SIDS, along with our island sisters and brothers in the Alliance of Small Island States, remained steadfast in their call for a new, global treaty, even when few others agreed. Our efforts were rewarded with the Paris Agreement, which finally enshrines our overriding moral imperative to limit temperature to 1.5 degrees.

I have the utmost confidence in Fiji, as our COP President, as well as the incoming President of Poland, to deliver on their mandate for COP24 so that the Paris Agreement can be fully implemented.

Of course, negotiating the technical rules of our new treaty is the easy part. The largest implementation challenges will be confronted when implementing climate action on the ground in every one of our countries. The Pacific SIDS have submitted some of the most ambitious contributions to the global effort, and we are all eager to get down to work. We understand that climate action is not only critical for avoiding the worst impacts of climate change, but also for achieving our national sustainable development priorities. We also recognize that we cannot achieve our objectives alone.

Make no mistake, the long-term credibility of the Paris Agreement relies on countries successfully achieving their NDCs when we are held to account in 2025 and 2030. It is hard to imagine that the treaty can remain relevant if a significant percentage of the world falls short. In addition, successful implementation of NDCs for most developing countries depends on reliable access to sufficient means of implementation.

It is for this reason that I was heartened to see the strong focus on domestic implementation efforts in the agenda for this CAPP Conference. The solutions have never been more abundant, and in the Pacific, the political will to act is strong. All that we lack are some of the necessary resources – affordable finance, technology transfer, and domestic capacity building. I expect that the discussions over next two days will place us all in a better position to access the means of implementation made newly available by our partners to implement our contributions.

With this objective in mind, Nauru will be convening a Leaders SDG17 Roundtable when we host the 49<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in September. The intention is to provide Pacific SIDS with a high-level political platform to share with new and traditional partners their specific needs for taking climate action. My officials have been reaching out to your climate focal points to gather information on your priority projects, so that our partners can come prepared to respond. I encourage all countries wishing to benefit from the Roundtable to please reach out to my delegation here in Fiji.

The Paris Agreement notwithstanding, the negative impacts of climate change will continue to worsen for the foreseeable future, which is why I addressed the United Nations Security Council earlier this month to highlight the security implications of climate change. Speaking on behalf of the Pacific SIDS, I reiterated our group's long-standing call for the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to begin working with countries on this issue. While there is good reason for optimism that the world is starting to act with ambition, we should never forget that our climate risk continues to grow by the day. The Special Representative is intended to ensure that the UN system has the knowledge and capacity to avert crisis when possible, and to respond effectively when crisis is unavoidable.

Mr. Prime Minister,

The full implementation of the Paris Agreement remains high international priority, and many of our new and traditional partners stand ready to support us. However, we do not know how long this window of opportunity will remain open. Nor can we predict when the next climate disaster will hit one of our countries. This Climate Action Pacific Partnership can help us seize this political moment with urgency.

Thank you.