



TUVALU

Statement

by

The Honourable TAVAU TEII

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural

Resources and Environment

of Tuvalu

at the

62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly Open Debate

New York, Monday 1st October 2007

(Check Against Delivery)

Permanent Mission of Tuvalu to the United Nations

800 Second Avenue Suite #400G

New York, NY 10017

Tel: 1-212-490 0534

Fax : 1-212-808 497

Mr President
Distinguished Heads of State and Government
Excellencies

Today has special meaning for us. Twenty-nine years ago under the blessings of this very noble body, Tuvalu was granted its Independence. I am honoured therefore to speak on behalf of the people and Government of Tuvalu and to convey to this Session of the United Nations General Assembly their warmest greetings.

At the outset Tuvalu wishes to associate itself with previous speakers in congratulating Your Excellency in your election as President of the 62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. We also wish to take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate the Secretary General, H.E Ban Ki-moon, for his appointment as head of the UN.

Mr President

As we celebrate our 29th anniversary of independence, let me convey our most sincere thanks and gratitude to the international community, especially our traditional development partners and close friends, international and regional organizations for their support and co-operations over the past years. We are confident that such gesture of understanding, friendship and co-operation will continue in the years ahead. Our endeavours to achieve excellence have been guided by the UN principles of good governance, mutual respect for the rule of law and for human rights, democracy and self-determination. Our future survival as a nation is founded on these basic ideals of the UN.

Mr President

Tuvalu welcomes the key priority issues of climate change; financing for development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals; countering terrorism; and the UN reform agenda which you Mr President has clearly identified and highlighted in your opening address of the 62nd session of this General Assembly. We would like, however, to focus on five main issues, namely: the UN reforms, the UN presence in Pacific small island developing States, the question of Taiwan's membership in the United Nations and its agencies, criteria for LDC graduation and responding to climate change.

On the UN reforms, we acknowledge with sincerity the tremendous efforts that have been made by the UN in fulfilling its purpose based on its noble pillars of development, peace and security, and human rights as enshrined under its Charter. Through such efforts, the UN has reached out to many countries of

the world in providing the required services for those who need them most. However, these efforts are always being encountered with many challenges which can only be resolved if the UN membership and all its other subsidiary bodies commit to work together in harmony and respect to each other.

The need for the UN to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency in carrying out its mandates and all its related programs cannot be over-emphasised. In this connection, Tuvalu welcomes and supports the ongoing work on the reform of the UN. In particular, Tuvalu supports the Secretary-General's report in response to the recommendations of the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence and agrees that the UN system must be more results-oriented, efficient and accountable.

Mr President.

Tuvalu fully supports the on-going reform work of the UN which promotes country-driven programmes. However, we are very disappointed with the very slow and unjustifiable progress in establishing the UN presence in the remaining Pacific small island developing states (SIDS) without UN offices. As a full member of the UN, we feel that Tuvalu and other small island developing states from the Pacific each deserves to have a UN office established in-country which will be instrumental in the coordination and implementation of UN projects and programmes on the ground. Our isolation and geographical fragmentation in itself, is justification for establishing a joint UN office in Tuvalu. We appeal to the United Nations for the earliest implementation of this long overdue commitment.

Mr President

Tuvalu highly commends the momentum of work on the reform of UN Security Council especially the excellent work done by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other related matters. Tuvalu warmly welcomes the next step of putting the issue for further inter-governmental negotiations as a way forward. Tuvalu further supports the draft resolution tabled by India for the same purpose in addressing this very important task.

However, we are very disturbed with the continuance of finger pointing and undiplomatic language being directed at small island developing States in their contributions to the UN Security Council reform process. As a small peace loving nation and a full member of the United Nations, Tuvalu has the sovereign right to support any issue that will benefit the achievement of the United Nations goals. We strongly believe that open dialogue and working together in mutual

understanding under the frameworks of the United Nations is the only way to reach our shared destiny in diversity and to respect one another.

Mr President

Tuvalu firmly believes that the paramount mission of the United Nations must remain the maintenance of peace and security, while ensuring the universal participation of all nations of the world, as clearly articulated in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter.

However, the UN cannot be said to be universal, nor can global peace and security be assured until Taiwan's membership and participation in the UN is properly resolved. It is disappointing to note that this august body does not even want, to at least, put the Taiwan's membership application on its agenda for proper consideration.

Let me reaffirm Tuvalu's strong support to Taiwan's membership application to the United Nations. We feel that this issue is long overdue and needs to be considered more seriously and purely on its own merits. Taiwan has shown international responsibility, and helped many countries in the world including my own country, Tuvalu in their development. It is our strong opinion that Taiwan, as a country with a well and clear defined territory, an established democratic system of government, and a responsible international player in world trade, development and diplomatic relations, the rights and self-determination of the Taiwanese people to join the UN should be urgently addressed. Taiwan has all the capabilities to fulfil its obligations as a peace-loving State to become a full member of the UN as required under the United Nations Charter.

Despite all this, Mr President, it is sad to note that the UN has continued to turn a blind eye on the wishes and needs of the people of Taiwan who simply want to be part of the International Family (the United Nations) and participate actively in the attainment of the UN noble pillars of development, security, and human rights. More sadly, the action taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in not complying with the requirements of the UN Charter and the Security Council Rules of Procedure, is disappointing. Tuvalu further appeals for the proper and urgent consideration of Taiwan's UN membership application.

Mr President,

The issue of graduation from the least developed countries category for Tuvalu has caused great anxiety. As recognized in the Mauritius Strategy for SIDS it is most alarming that all the potential candidates for graduation from the LDC list are Pacific SIDS despite our special disadvantages, and vulnerabilities to

economic and environmental degradation. We appeal to this great Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and our development partners to carefully reconsider the criteria for LDC graduation and their application, taking into account these special disadvantages of SIDS.

Mr President

Your leadership in choosing "Responding to Climate Change" as the theme of this Session in this noble house is highly commendable. Likewise Tuvalu applauds the leadership of the Secretary General on climate change. We are pleased that world leaders at the High Level Event on Climate Change, have agreed on the urgency to address climate change in a comprehensive way. We believe we are now ready to make a historical agreement in Bali to start negotiations for a new climate change agreement.

As the Prime Minister of Tuvalu Honourable Apisai Ielemia clearly stated in the June special issue of the UN Chronicle magazine, "If there is one issue that strikes at the heart of my nation, Tuvalu, it is climate change". Climate Change is undoubtedly an issue of extreme importance to a small, atoll nation like Tuvalu. The recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlights the extreme vulnerability of island countries like Tuvalu to the impacts of climate change, and the urgent necessity for global actions to address its vulnerability. In this context the Thirteenth Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali, will be very important.

In our view, the Bali Conference should have the following components:

First, it should reconfirm the important role of the Kyoto Protocol and encourage Parties to the Protocol to pledge new and substantial emissions reductions and encourage others to become a Party to it;

Second, we should agree to amend the Kyoto Protocol so that we open the door for newly industrialised countries, countries with economies in transition and any other interested countries, including developing countries to take on commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Third, we must commit to a new global framework on adaptation to the impacts of climate change. For highly vulnerable countries like Tuvalu this is an essential step in the process.

Fourth we must agree to a new negotiation process under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change that will establish a new legal agreement to allow

developing countries to make voluntary commitments to reduce their emissions. Under this arrangement we envisage that developing countries will be able to take voluntary commitments to reduce emissions from the energy, transport and forest sectors. These commitments would be linked to appropriate incentive mechanisms.

In the context of reducing emissions from deforestation we believe that any agreed measures must bring about real reductions in global emissions. Actions to reduce emissions from deforestation should not undermine or devalue efforts to reduce emissions from other sectors. Furthermore these actions should not infringe upon the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. The causes of deforestation are complex particularly as there are serious governance issues to resolve. Let's make sure we get a durable solution to this issue that will achieve a lasting climate change outcome.

Mr President,

There are a number of elements that we think are essential in a new global framework on adaptation. We elaborated some of these during the High Level Event on Climate Change. Let me highlight two:

First we must establish a whole new source of funding for adaptation and a new approach on how adaptation funding is managed. A potential new source of funding for adaptation could come from a levy on international aviation and maritime transport;

Second we must establish a global insurance facility to help assist vulnerable countries recover from the impacts of climate change.

Mr President

We must seize the opportunity at Bali. We must set ourselves a short time frame to create a new legally binding agreement on climate change. This should not undermine the Kyoto Protocol, but build on its strengths. Those countries that have turned their backs on the Kyoto Protocol must now take part in the global effort and commit to reducing their emissions within a tight timeframe. Once this is done, then we will see the rest of the world move forward, for it is crucial that all countries must make an effort to reduce their emissions. We must not waste the opportunity at Bali.

In conclusion my government encourages all countries to support the reform agenda for the UN including the serious consideration of self-determination and universal participation of all nations. We strongly encourage all governments to

use the next climate change Conference of Parties in Bali, to be a starting point for new negotiations on climate change. The future of Tuvalu and lives of many others like us is at stake.

I thank you.

TUVALU MO TE ATUA