



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Statement of Hon. Tevita Lavemaau
Minister for Finance and National Planning and Head of Delegation of the Kingdom of Tonga
To the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up Ministerial General Debate**

New York, Monday, 22nd May 2017

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Your Excellency Mr Frederick Shava, President of the Economic and Social Council
Your Excellency Mr Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations
Excellencies
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the Government of Tonga at this Forum on Financing for Development being held here in New York this week.

From the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the facilitators for organizing this forum which is held in accordance with the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda in recognition of the need to follow up and review the financing for development outcomes as well as the means of implementation (MOIs) of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr President, Tonga is committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while at the same time recognises that financing from all sources is required for this critical task. Finance needs to be mobilised from domestic and international sources including both public and private, and transfer of technology and capacity building needs to take place together with an enabling policy environment to advance our sustainable development goals.

Tonga, however, faces a number of critical challenges which we share with all Small Island Development States (SIDS) which also impacts our financing needs. These include limited absorptive capacity; lack of economies of scale due to small size; geographical isolation from major markets; narrow resource and export base; and exposure and vulnerability to external shocks and climate change including more frequent and intense natural disasters.

Mr President, despite these unique challenges, Tonga stands together with other Pacific SIDS as a region to implement our sustainable development goals and to share our experiences and lessons learnt. We reaffirm our commitment to the Samoa Pathway, the outcome of the Third International Conference for SIDs, where we called for an increase in the number and forms of

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partnership at the national, regional and international levels to address issues related to Small Islands Developing States. We continue to move the sustainable development agenda forward, to meet internationally agreed development goals, reduce poverty, build resilience and improve quality of life for all.

Mr President, as part of the Pacific SIDS, we stand together as a region to assist each other in implementing the 2030 Agenda. We note the need for adequate resources to support the regional coordination and national implementation of the sustainable development goals, and we seek particular attention in the following areas:-

1. The adverse impacts of climate change is a global issue which greatly affects ourselves as Small Island Developing States and threaten our own livelihoods. We acknowledge the assistance given to us to access global climate financing and we look forward to positive considerations of our applications to the Green Climate Fund. In this context, we fully support Fiji's Presidency of the COP23 later this year to further advocate the need to address the climate change issue and the need for greater focus and innovation in the area of climate change adaptation in Small Island Developing States.
2. We note the role of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in disaster finance and respective financial tools available to Pacific Islands Countries. While acknowledging their work on expanding the definition of fragility, we urge them to further refine their work to include the drivers of vulnerability experienced in the Pacific, particularly natural disasters and adverse economic shocks, and to consider these issues when making operational financing decisions affecting Pacific Island Countries and Small Island Developing States;
3. Dependence on imported fossil fuels has been a major source of economic vulnerability, and a key challenge for SIDS for many decades and that sustainable energy, including enhanced accessibility to modern energy services, energy efficiency, and use of economically viable and environmentally sound technology, plays a critical role in enabling the sustainable development of SIDS. Enhanced international cooperation to provide adequate support and facilitate access to clean energy, research and technology, and for supplying modern and sustainable energy services are critical to overcoming these challenges.
4. Potential options for Ocean Finance in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories are critical for our Small Island Developing States given our vast oceans and seas and their intrinsic link to sustainable development. The outcome of the United Nations Oceans Conference to be held next month is important to determine next steps in further developing our blue economy. Healthy, productive and resilient oceans and coasts are critical for poverty eradication and access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, livelihoods and economic development.

5. Health is a precondition, an outcome, and an indicator of all three dimensions of sustainable development. The threat of communicable and non-communicable diseases remain serious global concerns and constitute one of the major challenges for SIDS in the twenty first century. The enormous burden that NCDs place on us requires a comprehensive strategy of prevention and control, including price and tax measures on tobacco and other relevant products.

Mr President, the outcome of this forum is critical to determine and to assess progress and identify obstacles and challenges to the implementation of the FfD outcomes and the delivery of the Means of Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure no one is left behind. The universal and ambitious 2030 Agenda requires a renewed and strengthened partnership amongst all of us as critical players and key stakeholders in advancing global sustainable development.

We look forward to continuing our effort and contribution to this worthy cause of global commitment towards sustainable development to create a better world for ALL.

I thank you Mr President.