



TUVALU

Statement

by

His Excellency, The Honourable MAATIA TOAFA
Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
of Tuvalu at the
High Level Plenary Meeting of the Sixtieth Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

"2005 WORLD SUMMIT"

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Mr President

We, the people of Tuvalu extend our deepest sympathy to the people and Government of the United States of America for the tragic loss they have suffered from Hurricane Katrina. Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you recover from the calamity of this disaster.

Mr President

We meet here together in this great assembly hall of the United Nations because we are confronted with enormous challenges. And because we are entrusted by all our citizens, to collectively agree on actions to address them.

The Millennium Development Goals have been set as an ambitious pathway for eradicating poverty, a pathway that should also lead to ensuring long term sustainable development, peace and security in all countries of the world.

Tuvalu commends the extensive reports on the achievement of this pathway and the work on the Outcome Document for this High Level Plenary. We sincerely thank the outgoing General Assembly President HE Mr Jean Ping for his sterling leadership in preparing the document for our summit.

Mr President

There is no doubt that much has been achieved over the past five years. The goodwill of the international community to compliment national efforts in this process is greatly appreciated.

However, much more remain to be done. As we observe, MDGs and particularly poverty statistics in many regions are discouragingly high, particularly with regards to poor sanitation, access to safe drinking water, high child mortality, mother care, environmental degradation, and low access to basic quality education. There is also a need to improve access to sexual and reproductive health particularly in relations to maternal health and HIV/AIDS.

In many LDCs, including Tuvalu, it is the case that the achievement of the MDGs is off mark - sidetracked by the lack of access to financial and technical assistance, lack of human and infrastructural capacity, and the unfortunate lack of attention and coordination. LDCs need financial and technical assistance, and as such we appeal for full and effective implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs.

Mr President

Tuvalu supports the recommendations in the Secretary General's report 'In Larger Freedom' on the importance of global security. But in so-focussing, we cannot allow unilateralist political agendas to divert attention from other security issues and the main MDG task of eradicating poverty. Global security must be advanced on a multilateral and multi-dimensional approach.

We must focus attention on poverty eradication and sustainable development, as these are fundamental underpinnings of global peace, security, and ensuring human rights for all.

Tuvalu supports the reforms proposed for the United Nations, including expansion of the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council, reviewing of its working methods, and rationalisation of the General Assembly work. We also reiterate our view that Japan, Germany, Brazil and India should be considered for permanent membership in the expanded Council.

We also support the call for the establishment of the Human Right Council in recognition of the centrality of human rights as the founding pillar of the United Nations ideals.

Mr President

Whilst on security, there is a much broader security issue which relates to environmental security. Living in a very fragile island environment, our long-term security and sustainable development is closely linked to issues of climate change, preserving biodiversity, managing our limited forests and water resources.

As witnessed world-over, a natural disaster like cyclone, made worse by the effects of climate change, can have a devastating effect on economies and lives. For Tuvalu the effects are scary. These are the security issues we believe the UN should be paying more attention to.

Mr President

Small island developing States like Tuvalu face a number of other unique challenges, which are well acknowledged and highlighted in the Mauritius Strategy for the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The full and effective implementation of the Strategy is key to SIDS achieving MDGs and sustainable development.

In saying that, we are making every effort to ensure our own sustainable development. Last year my government held a national conference to map out a national development strategy based on the principles of sustainable

development and closely linked to the Millennium Development Goals. The strategy document that came out of this conference which is called *T Kakeega II* gives my government a good assessment of what progress we have made in meeting the MDGs and what further action is needed.

But there are global issues that are beyond our control for which Tuvalu needs the supporting hand of regional bodies in the Pacific, and the international community. There is also a very strong need for a physical presence of the UN in isolated SIDS like Tuvalu, and we call for special consideration of this need by the UN Secretariat.

We are hopeful that the Outcome Document out of this Summit will avail the necessary vehicle to further advance our efforts to reach our MDGs and ensure our sustainable development.

Finally, the achievement of the MDGs would not be possible without the full participation of all development partners. Recognising the contribution of the Republic of China to international development and noting its economic and democratic reforms, we support their inclusion as partner in our joint collaborative efforts and as a UN Member.

God Bless the United Nations, God Bless Tuvalu

Thank you.