



PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**Statement by**

**His Majesty King Tupou VI**

**On the occasion of the**

**General Debate**

**of the Sixty-ninth Session**

**of the United Nations General Assembly**

**Saturday, 27 September 2014**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Check against delivery**

**Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Sixty-ninth Session of the General Assembly. I assure you that the Tongan delegation will fully support the crucial work ahead under your able leadership.

May I express gratitude to your predecessor, His Excellency Dr. John Ashe, for the sterling manner in which he conducted the previous session, especially his championing of Small Island Developing States issues.

I also pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for his exemplary stewardship to advance the United Nations' commitment to building a more peaceful and prosperous world in the midst of diverse, multiplex issues it faces today.

**Mr. President,**

My delegation and I welcome your Theme for this year's General Debate: "Delivering on and implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda" and look forward to the three High-Level Thematic Debates and High-Level Event you will convene next year. As we work together to formulate a historical Post-2015 Development Agenda, we are cognizant that we must be ambitious and transformative in our approach to ensure tangible benefits for our people. Responsive access to financial resources is needed to cement the adoption of a meaningful Development Agenda and its full implementation.

**Mr. President,**

Tonga supports the affirmation that the Intergovernmental Report of the Open-Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be integrated into the Post-2015 Development Agenda, with a global commitment to eradicate Poverty by 2030. The proposed SDGs on Ocean, Seas and Marine resources and Climate Change are intimately, and intricately, woven to the very fabric of the survival of Pacific Small Islands Developing States.

Without them, our joint aspirations for sustainable development and economic growth will not be achieved and we will be left behind. The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated modality, known as the SAMOA Pathway outcome document, was endorsed by the leaders of SIDS and their partners earlier this month. It is a blueprint for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States for the next decade and therefore must be integrated into the form and substance of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

In order to guarantee harmony in our implementation of the Development Agenda, Tonga concurs that each country should take primary responsibility for its own economic growth, social development, and environment sustainability. However, this can only be fully realized with the active engagement of all relevant stakeholders through genuine and durable partnerships. We look forward to working together towards the Summit in September 2015 when Heads of State and Government will adopt a Post-2015 Development Agenda, which

will be inclusive and people-centred. It will be a historical event adding further meaning to the celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations.

**Mr. President,**

This year, the Pacific Island Leaders endorsed the Palau Declaration "*The Ocean: Life & Future*" *Charting a Course to Sustainability*.

Tonga is a joint custodian of the Pacific Ocean whose natural resources are the bedrock of Pacific Island economic, social, and environmental development. The well-being of the Tongan people is therefore, premised on the Sustainable Development, management, and conservation of the Ocean and its resources.

The management of seabed exploration and exploitation is an important facet of Tonga's interests in the oceans and has worked diligently through the relevant institutions established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to ensure activity within the Area located in the Pacific Ocean is managed appropriately for the benefit of humankind.

**Mr President,**

Tonga, for the first time, sought election to a seat at the relevant body established under UNCLOS, the Council of the International Seabed Authority, and was elected by acclamation by the member States. This year, Tonga passed legislation related to seabed mining activities within Tonga's jurisdiction and under the provisions of the UNCLOS. Tonga joined its Pacific Island neighbours in supporting the call for the launching of negotiations by September 2015 for an International Agreement under UNCLOS for the management, and conservation of the Ocean and its resources both within, and in areas beyond its national jurisdiction.

**Mr. President,**

Tonga commends the Secretary-General's initiative to convene the recent Climate Summit for World leaders, to deliver bold announcements on Climate Change mitigation and adaptation. In the spirit of sustaining International cooperation, we support the call to urgently address the adverse impact of Climate Change. The collective response will be subject to the outcome of the on-going negotiations through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Nevertheless, the response must be based upon the principles of equity, and of common but differentiated responsibility as enshrined within the Convention. The principles and overall objective espoused by the Convention, have to be fully observed, if the threat of Climate Change is to be effectively addressed and overcome for our common benefit.

The 2013 World Risk Report had ranked Tonga as the second most vulnerable country in the world to natural disasters. This vulnerability was evidenced by our first Category 5 Cyclone earlier this year that devastated our central island group, displacing thousands, resulting in millions of dollars worth of damage. However, and fortunately, it caused only one fatality. Today, this same central island group is experiencing an unseasonal drought.

Tonga has used a whole-of-country approach, through its Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management, to find a basis to move forward with its adaptation measures. In terms of mitigation, Tonga is incrementally reducing its fossil fuel consumption.

**Mr. President,**

Tonga applauds the High-Level Event on Combating Climate Change and recalls Pacific Island countries as among the first to raise the alarm on the implications of Security and Climate Change, both regionally and universally. In this regard, Tonga supports the call for the reconsideration by the Security Council to recognize the linkage between Climate Change and International peace and security.

Furthermore, Tonga advocates the call for the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on Climate and Security to research this linkage and report back to member States.

**Mr. President,**

Tonga associates itself with Member States to appeal for a meaningful approach beyond the rhetoric, to reform the Council to be more representative and inclusive through the Intergovernmental process. Moreover, we underpin the supplication by Heads of State and Government in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, to include the important work of revitalizing the General Assembly.

This overall reform process must continue in order to ensure greater efficiency, representativeness, and transparency throughout the United Nations system as a whole. This will allow this great Institution to be more adequately prepared to respond to the realities of which we live in today.

**Mr. President,**

Finally, for future generations to live in a better world, we must work harmoniously to fulfil our responsibilities and seek the Almighty God to guide us through rising challenges.