



# TUVALU

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Statement

Presented by

The Honourable Prime Minister of Tuvalu

Mr. Willy Telavi

at

The 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
General Debate

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Mr. President  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

As this is my first time to stand on this podium as Prime Minister of Tuvalu and participate in the General Debate of this august body, I am delighted to convey warmest greetings and best wishes from my people and Government, and I am honoured to speak today on their behalf. Let me first extend my special thanks and sincere appreciation to the Government of the United States of America as the host country, for the warm hospitality and special protocols accorded to my delegation since our arrival.

Mr. President, ten years ago, Tuvalu established and opened its Permanent Mission to the United Nations here in New York with a mandate to engage more closely with nations of the Global Family. Despite our limited resources as one of the smallest member States, our presence is a simple testimony of our hope and trust in collaboration with member States in the pursuit of our destiny. This further reflects our continued commitment to uphold the maintenance of international peace and security, development, and human rights as fundamental pillars of the United Nations, enshrined in its Charter.

Mr. President, Tuvalu warmly welcomes and fully supports the four main areas of focus of your presidency such as the: peaceful settlement of disputes; UN reform and revitalization; improving disaster prevention and response; and sustainable development and global prosperity, which you have clearly identified during the opening of this session. In particular the theme, "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes", that you have proposed for this General Debate is timely, considering what is happening around the world today.

In this context I wish to express our belated tribute and respect to the people and Government of the United States of America in commemoration of the recent passing of the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Tuvalu strongly condemns such terrorist acts and all similar incidents worldwide and our prayers are with those who have lost their loved ones. Tuvalu further salutes those who have lost their lives for the cause of justice and peace.

As a peace-loving nation, Tuvalu fully supports the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security across the globe. However at the same time the integrity and sovereignty of countries should be respected at all costs. Tuvalu firmly believes that military and violent action should not be used as a means for the settlement of disputes. Instead parties concerned should be encouraged to discuss and understand the root causes of their differences and try to listen to each other in a more peaceful manner.

Mr. President, today the world is undergoing profound changes without any boundary through the unprecedented impacts of globalisation and other related global events, which have critical implications for Tuvalu. This has been further exacerbated by the continued severe impact of the global financial and economic crisis, which has an enormous and critical negative effect on Tuvalu's economy. In particular the Tuvalu Trust

Fund, which is the main source of revenue to stabilise our recurrent budget has been severely affected. As a consequence, my Government has no other option apart from streamlining and containing its national recurrent budget to a sustainable level to enable the provision of basic services to its people during these difficult times.

In this regard, I humbly call upon the international community and development partners for an urgent need to fulfil their commitments to assist the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), like Tuvalu, through the implementation of the Istanbul Program of Action (IPOA) adopted at the 4th UN LDCs Conference held in Turkey earlier this year.

The IPOA is a living document that needs to be implemented vigorously and collectively by both LDCs and the international community during the next ten years. In this regard, I am pleased to confirm that the main thrusts of such Program of Action will be integrated and mainstreamed in the Tuvalu National Sustainable Development Strategy, Kakega II, during the National Review Summit scheduled for next month.

Furthermore, as a Least Developed Country, Tuvalu is most vulnerable to global economic shocks, impacts of climate change and to disease outbreaks such as non-communicable diseases. Tuvalu continues to call and appeal to the United Nations to take these seriously into consideration when addressing the question of graduation of LDCs. Despite the ambitious target of the IPOA for 50 per cent of LDCs to be graduated within the next decade, Tuvalu firmly believes that its economic and environmental vulnerability coupled with its continuous dependence on ODA cannot be totally ignored. In this context, the graduation criteria need to be reviewed to reflect and recognise our vulnerability.

Mr. President, last month Tuvalu published its second Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2010/2011, which highlights the progress we have made to date in achieving such goals. Despite the ongoing impact of recent global crises that Tuvalu continues to encounter, it is encouraging to note that five of the MDGs are most likely to be achieved and three have mixed results by 2015. As alluded to earlier, while we have made progress in achieving the MDGs, such progress can be reversed overnight due to our particular economic and environmental vulnerability.

Mr. President, the ongoing process and inter-governmental negotiations at the UN to revitalize and reform the General Assembly and Security Council respectively are fully supported. However, whilst we recognise the importance of such UN bodies to undertake such reforms in order to update their mandates, we are concerned that the time taken to conclude such undertakings is far too long. In this regard, we look forward to a more realistic timetable to complete these negotiations in the near future once and for all.

Mr. President, our collective efforts to strengthen and maintain peace across the globe will be meaningless if the United Nations continue to turn blind eyes and deaf ears to Taiwan's contribution and efforts toward this common goal. Further, Taiwan's continued contribution to the international community as one of the committed development partners cannot be over-emphasised. In this regard, Tuvalu strongly urges the United Nations to

recognise such contribution without any reservations. In particular, Tuvalu calls upon the UN subsidiary bodies especially the World Health Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to allow Taiwan to fully participate meaningfully in their meetings and activities.

Mr. President, climate change is a priority global issue of the 21st century and beyond, that requires a global solution. Climate change impacts countries unequally and not all countries possess the same capacity and resilience to adapt and respond to such impacts. For a small island developing State like Tuvalu, climate change is no doubt a security issue, which threatens our survival.

At the end of this year Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate change will be meeting in Durban to advance our work on climate change. This is a critical meeting as time is fast running out for highly vulnerable countries like Tuvalu. My country believes the meeting in Durban must deliver key outcomes:

First, we must adopt amendments to the Kyoto Protocol to allow for a second commitment period. It will be necessary to adopt a decision that includes provisional entry into force of these amendments to avoid any gap between the first and second commitment periods. This is necessary to ensure the Clean Development Mechanism continues without any complications and that the CDM continues to provide finance for the Adaptation Fund.

Second, we must rapidly progress the development of an international mechanism to address loss and damage. For highly vulnerable countries like Tuvalu this is vitally important. We need an international mechanism to spread the burden of building after major weather catastrophes.

Third, we must refocus our work on reducing our emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. To properly reduce global deforestation we must put in place appropriate measures that effectively address its cause. We must look at this from the demand side and explore all means of regulating the trade of products that are driving deforestation.

Finally, we believe that all major emitting countries must take more decisive action to reduce their emissions. The current pledging system found in the Cancun agreement is inadequate. We will be seeking a mandate in Durban to commence negotiations of a new legally binding agreement for those major emitting countries that have not taken commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. This agreement should complement the Kyoto Protocol, but not replace it.

Mr. President, as we make progress towards the Rio + 20 Conference next year, we must ensure that there is a focused chapter on the needs of Small Island Developing Countries. In considering the theme of the green economy, we must explore carefully how we can redirect the current international trading system to properly reflect the needs of small island economies. We need accessible and affordable renewable energy and energy

efficiency technologies, we need help to protect our blue economies - our oceans, and we need to explore new preferential trade arrangements to overcome our size disadvantage.

Mr President, in conclusion, let me reiterate the severe impact of the recent financial and economic crisis and other ongoing global crises, which continue to affect my country's economy and its overall social and economic development. As a small island developing State and a least developed country most vulnerable to such crises and dependent on overseas development assistance, Tuvalu appeals to the international community to urgently honour and fulfil their commitments and obligations outlined in the Istanbul Program of Action and other international platforms. We firmly believe that with our continuous cooperation and strong partnerships at all levels, we can successfully overcome these problems for the sake of our people and humankind.

May God Bless the United Nations. Tuvalu mo te Atua.

I thank you.

