



SOLOMON ISLANDS

FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

STATEMENT BY
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

MINISTERIAL SEGMENT OF THE
FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Thursday 6th April 1995, Berlin, Germany.

Madam President, the Honorable Ms Merkel, Federal Minister
for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
of the Federal Republic of Germany

Honorable Ministers

Excellencies

Distinguished delegates

NGO Representatives

Ladies and Gentlemen

Madam President

Thank you for the honor and privilege to be able to address the first Conference
of the Parties.

First, allow me to convey through you, warm greetings from the government and
people of Solomon Islands, to the government and people of Germany and to
congratulate you on your election as president of the conference. My delegation
extends its gratitude for the generous hospitality accorded to all the delegates
and excellent facilities provided for this first Conference of the Parties.

Madam President,

The Framework Convention on Climate Change has the purpose to save the
earth from the possible threats of climate change. We have assembled here in
Berlin, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention, to
give meaning and advance our efforts in meeting the objective of the
Convention, to combat the risks of the adverse effects of human-induced climate
change.

We know that more research is needed to understand climate change and that there are still uncertainties. And while it might be necessary to provide reliable information to guide policy and assist decision makers, my delegation believes as others do, that the current commitments are inadequate and that the international community must take additional precautionary measures, to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects.

The solution to the question of the human-induced climate change does not depend on those who doubt the obvious for the sake of economic development or retention of employment opportunities, but to a large extent, it depends on the collective efforts of those who care about the future and life on earth.

Eight days ago, the distinguished Ambassador of Samoa, on behalf of the Alliance of the Small Island States (AOSIS), introduced the AOSIS protocol and pleaded for greater urgency to strengthen the Convention and cited the now visible characteristics of climate change everywhere on earth.

Madam President

My country, Solomon Islands, is of no exception. Water sources for our people living in small atolls and low lying islands have been salinated by salt-water intrusion, rendering them unfit for consumption. Actions of sea waves and coastal erosion, exacerbated by tropical storms and cyclones is taking away the very little land available. For the first time in our history, some of our water sources dried up this year, after unusually dry periods with no rainfall. As well our fishing industry, the country's major income earner, reported poor catches for the past three or four years because of the warming of the ocean.

Solomon Islands is one of the island countries in the South Pacific. The small island countries of the South Pacific are rich in culture, flora and fauna. It is a

region with over 5.5 million people, speaking more than 900 distinct languages, including Solomon Islands with a population of 350,000 people, speaking 80 languages. Our islands are also home to some of the rare and endemic species. We possess cultures, flora and fauna found nowhere else on earth, a treasure which is now under threat.

Certainly we are part of this earth and equally have the right to our existence and identity on this planet earth, our home.

Madam President

Like other small island states, our islands are faced with specific problems and vulnerabilities. Many have small economic base and limited resources, narrow range of products, and because of their geographical location, are isolated from the main markets of the world. In economic terms, climate change will, among other impacts, make us more vulnerable to lack of investor confidence and "credit worthiness". In fact, some of our countries are already living through these experiences right now.

My delegation believes, that the AOSIS Protocol, which has a specific target and timetable, is a first necessary small step in the reductions of emissions of Annex I parties to meet the objective of the Convention. The protocol is to strengthen the Convention to save the earth, the peoples of this world and the environment. At this point I would like to endorse the statement made earlier on by my distinguished colleague, the Ambassador of Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Islands States.

Annex I parties must take the lead, and must provide environmentally sound technologies and new and additional financial resources to developing countries. This is the only way forward. The effective participation of developing countries, to implement their own commitments under the Convention, is

dependent on that transfer of technology and new and additional resources.

What a difference it would make if political will can be translated into real action.

Since the beginning of the Climate Change negotiations, we have invested in time, energy and money to get to where we are today. We come to Berlin with a mission, one of hope, innovation, confidence building, creating a partnership and shaping a new culture of international cooperation. Let us act and move forward together now. The lives of future generations and the fate of this planet are equally in our hands.

To conclude, Madam President, I have to say this to the Conference of the Parties.

What is happening in your backyard is affecting mine, and what is affecting my backyard, will also affect yours.

Thank you Madam President.