

**STATEMENT AT THE FIRST  
SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF  
THE PARTIES (COP1) TO THE FRAMEWORK-  
CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
(UNFCCC), BERLIN, FEDERAL  
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY,  
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by

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Madame Chairperson,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure and a great honour for me to **address this** distinguished assembly. At the outset, I wish to record the Republic of **Vanuatu's gratitude** to the Government and the people of the Federal Republic of Germany for hosting this first session of the **Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** and for the hospitality extended to my **delegation**. I also wish to **echo my gratitude to the Convention Secretariat** for making it possible for my delegation to **participate in this important Conference** and for the preparatory work that has been done by the interim Secretariat **during the last two years leading to this Conference**.

Madame Chairperson, what now seems a long time ago when the Republic of Vanuatu and the other 149 countries signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change at the Rio Conference, we are here gathered again to discuss and decide on the very issues **that have established the Convention and its related matters**. We have participated in the **negotiating committee meetings to follow closely what decisions were made by the Parties following the adoption of the Convention**.

The Republic of Vanuatu is an island country in the South Pacific which has a total population of **168,000 people**. **It has a wide range of ecosystems and species diversity, a high degree of economic and cultural dependence on the natural environment**

which is highly vulnerable to a wide range of natural disasters, and boasts a diversity of cultures and languages.

The economy and the environment of our country is extremely fragile. Our economy and fragile environment **are not only** susceptible to global warming but also to natural disasters such as cyclones, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Our country already faces a widening trade imbalance and such disasters only worsen our situation.

Madame Chairperson, global warming and sea level rise pose serious environmental threats to our country. The Republic of Vanuatu is **vulnerable because it includes** some low-lying islands and because the majority of the population live and depend on **livelihoods** gleamed from coastal zones. The exact amount or the rate at which the sea level will change remains uncertain and this adds to our concern, as does the feeling of helplessness in the face of an environmental impact which may not have been of our making. Despite this uncertainty, some have offered suggestions regarding some possibilities. For example, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted a sealevel rise of 3 - 10 cm per decade.

Madame Chairperson, the emission of greenhouse gases threatens the cultural, economic and physical **survival** of our country. As a developing nation, the Republic of Vanuatu cannot be expected to bear a disproportionate share of the costs associated with global climate change. We believe **that countries** should share the burden of abatement in a way that reflects their relative level of development. The Convention provides that

country Parties undertake commitments in conformity with their level of development and as such, the developed countries should shoulder a heavier burden than those of the developing nations. We also recognize that the commitments of industrialized countries on the stabilization and reduction of the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as well as commitments on the provisions of financial resources and technology are very important in the implementation of the Convention.

Madame Chairperson, the Republic of Vanuatu strongly supports the initiative of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) in proposing a protocol. In our view, it constitutes an important input to the strengthening of the Convention. We feel that in order to reach the ultimate objective of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, a comprehensive protocol for greenhouse gases should be adopted.

Madame Chairperson, time has now come, two years after UNCED in Rio when the Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed by 150 countries that concrete decisions have to be made about the future of the Convention, the budget of the Secretariat and on the commitments of the Parties, in their endeavor to protect the climate System, including the Principle of a balance burden sharing in line with the common but differentiated responsibilities of the Parties. In so far as the Republic of Vanuatu is concerned, we will do whatever is possible to meet our obligation under the Convention.

Madame Chairperson, my Government realizes that it is not going to be an easy task for us to implement the Convention without the cooperation of the developed countries. We request that financial assistance from bilateral and multilateral sources be made available and accessible for countries like the Republic of Vanuatu for programs that will enhance sustainable development and also contribute to the implementation of the Convention.

Madame Chairperson, we have signed ourselves to an international Convention which is important for the future of this planet. We should all join hands and work together to fulfill our commitments and obligations to save our planet. Our continued efforts hold the promise of reversing current trends and moving us towards the goal of protecting the global environment.

Madame Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.