

STATEMENT BY
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OF THE
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON
CLIMATE CHANGE

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Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

As we meet once again to engage in these debates, which year after year seem to treat climate change as though it has yet to occur, let me report to you that we in the Federated States of Micronesia are watching significant portions of our coastal areas erode, watching salt water intrusion destroy our staple crops, and wrestling with lengthy droughts and outbreaks of new waterborne diseases.

I think we all need to ask ourselves one very simple question: why are we here today? I can tell you why my delegation is here. Because with the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action two years ago, the FSM hoped that this year's Conference of the Parties would be a celebratory one—a birthday of sorts for the Kyoto Protocol. But now we have watched a week of negotiations pass, and we have still not reached agreement on many critical issues. We cannot fail to deliver results from these negotiations. We either succeed together in these rooms over the next week, or we fail together, and in so doing we jeopardize the world as we know it.

The emission reduction targets ultimately reflected in the Protocol were a huge disappointment to my country. The FSM and other small island states like us had sought and urged much stricter reductions for the sake of our future generations. We all recognized in Kyoto that greater

commitments would be necessary to slow the momentum of climate change. We accepted the Kyoto commitments as a step in the right direction, though a miniscule one, given the enormity of our challenge. However, as these negotiations proceed, even the small “something” we achieved in Kyoto is now looking more and more suspiciously like nothing, because it is becoming increasingly clear that many parties do not seriously intend to make good on those very small commitments.

My delegation has been astounded and dismayed by the ingeniousness of the arguments advanced throughout this process that seem to have as their sole goal the erosion and nullification of the commitments already agreed. This has been most evident in the expanding role of land use activities. Adding insult to injury, we have been asked to accept that the only consequences that should fall upon Annex I parties for a failure to meet even the extremely moderate commitments contained in the Protocol should be flexible ones of Annex I Parties’ own devising.

Apparently, despite the negotiation downward of emissions commitments in Kyoto, and despite the creation of the flexibility mechanisms to ensure that those commitments were attainable, many of our partners in this exercise still feel that the Protocol as a whole is not flexible enough.

Well, as a small island state, we too are finding far less comfort in the Protocol as time goes on – but for the opposite reason. We feel compelled to ask, were some of our industrialized partners crossing their fingers behind their backs when these commitments were made? Are they still

hoping to avoid taking tough measures at home, even though home is where the trouble began? I hope this is not the case.

This is not a game that we will all ultimately win by pursuing least cost solutions farthest from home. We cannot permit these negotiations to result in perverse financial incentives in the name of greenhouse gas reduction. Shame on everyone here if, in the name of protecting our climate system, we adopt rules of the game that have the effect of discouraging renewable energy and energy efficient technologies. Shame on us if, in the name of protecting our planet for future generations, we provide financial incentives that could well distort entire ecosystems around the globe, creating an entirely new set of problems for our developing countries.

Mr. President,

We have a moral and joint responsibility not to turn our backs on the necessary solutions. We all know that the measures that will be necessary to reduce emissions will have enormous associated financial burdens and political and economic repercussions. But the long-term costs of hesitation due to a lack of political will are incalculable. If necessary solutions are costly, if they are hard to sell, or if they result in lifestyle alterations to some in industrialized countries, perhaps we need to summon the political will to say, so be it. At the end of the day, we will all benefit from a strong Protocol, including future generations of the very same lobbyists and interest groups who are now working hard to slow down the process.

While some nations may fear a loss of consumer spending power if the deal struck in Kyoto is adhered to, we, in stark contrast, fear for our very existence. If we can no longer find clean water, or look to the land to produce our crops, or look to our reefs to provide the fish upon which we have survived for hundreds upon hundreds of years, without interference by the outside world, I ask you: what do we do? For most of our islands, adaptation may ultimately mean relocating to another location, thereby losing our culture, our tradition and consequently our identity.

Mr. President,

My country feels that no success will have been achieved in this entire process unless this Conference results in decisions that ensure that the minimal reduction targets that were negotiated in Kyoto will be honored. Let us refocus ourselves on environmental integrity in these negotiations and not on ways of shirking our commitments and responsibilities.

Thank you.