

PAPUA NEW GUINEA COUNTRY STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MR MAX RAI, LEADER OF THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA DELEGATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE, 3-13 NOVEMBER 1998, BUENOS AIRES, REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA.

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MR PRESIDENT

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES, AND FELLOW CITIZENS OF THE WORLD.

ON BEHALF OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, I TOO WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND WISH TO THANK THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF ARGENTINA FOR THE HOSPITALITY ACCORDED TO MY DELEGATION FOR THE DURATION OF OUR PARTICIPATION AT THIS CONFERENCE.

I ALSO SEEK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, MR MICHAEL CUTAJAR AND HIS HARD WORKING STAFF OF THE UNFCCC SECRETARIAT FOR THE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANISATION OF THIS CONFERENCE. ALSO, THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA MUST ALSO BE COMMENDED HIGHLY FOR SUCCESSFULLY HOSTING THIS IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

MR PRESIDENT

PAPUA NEW GUINEA IS APPRECIATIVE OF THE COMMENDABLE EFFORTS DISPLAYED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS THE CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE THROUGH THE ADOPTION AND ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE CONVENTION AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL. THE ADOPTION OF THE KYOTO PROTOCOL WAS A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD WITH SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS FOR ANNEX 1 AND NON-ANNEX 1 PARTIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION.

MR PRESIDENT

WE ARE BEING REMINDED BY SCIENTISTS THAT THE COMMITMENT BY ANNEX1 PARTIES TO REDUCE THE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY AN AVERAGE OF 5.2% IS NOT ADEQUATE THEREFORE THERE IS REPEATED CALLS FOR MORE GHG EMISSION REDUCTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION. COUNTRY PARTIES, ESPECIALLY THE ANNEX1 PARTIES MUST SHOW LEADERSHIP TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMITMENT OF THE CONVENTION AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL WHEN IT ENTERS INTO FORCE TO ADDRESS THIS GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN.

MR PRESIDENT

WE HAVE GATHERED IN BUENOS AIRES TO DISCUSS THE COMMITMENTS OF THE CONVENTION AND MOST IMPORTANTLY TO REACH AGREEMENTS ON THE RULES, PRINCIPLES, METHODOLOGIES AND OTHER OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE COMMITMENTS UNDER THE KYOTO PROTOCOL. HAVING DISCUSSED THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF THE PROTOCOL FOR THE PAST DAYS, WE NOW HAVE A FAIR IDEA OF THE DIFFERENT POSITIONS OF PARTIES ON THOSE ISSUES.

FOR ELEMENTS, SUCH AS THE CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM, JOINT IMPLEMENTATION, AND EMISSION TRADING REQUIRES MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON IMPORTANT OPERATIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES BEFORE COUNTRIES COULD ADVANCE DISCUSSIONS ON HOW THOSE MECHANISMS COULD BE IMPLEMENTED. FOR THESE AND OTHER OUTSTANDING ELEMENTS, PARTIES ARE URGED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH EACH OTHER IN THE SPIRIT OF THE CONVENTION TO REACH AGREEMENTS ON HOW BEST THOSE MECHANISM CAN BE RESOLVED TO FAST-TRACK THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESPECTIVE COMMITMENTS UNDER THE ABOVE AGREEMENTS.

MR PRESIDENT

WE ARE INFORMED OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT. TO MANY PARTIES, THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE WOULD BE ENCOUNTERED IN THE DISTANT FUTURE IF APPROPRIATE MEASURES ARE NOT TAKEN NOW TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THIS GLOBAL CONCERN. BUT LET ME TELL YOU IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT PAPUA NEW GUINEA IS ALREADY EXPERIENCING UNPRECEDENTED DISASTERS, SUCH AS FLOODING, FROSTS, AND DROUGHTS, WHICH MAY BE CAUSED BY EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN 1997, PAPUA NEW GUINEA EXPERIENCED THE WORST DROUGHT ON RECORD, WHICH RESULTED IN A LOT DEATHS FROM STARVATION AND DROUGHT RELATED DISEASES.

MR PRESIDENT

AT THIS JUNCTURE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA FULLY ASSOCIATES ITSELF WITH THE STATEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT OF TUVALU, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT OF NEW ZEALAND, AND THE CHAIRMAN OF AOSIS AND OTHERS THAT HAVE ALLUDED EARLIER TO ON ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS BEING EXPERIENCED IN THE PACIFIC REGION. LET ME ADD THAT THOSE ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHIES HAVE NOT ONLY DEVASTATED THE SUBSISTENCE LIVELIHOOD OF OUR PEOPLE BUT ALSO THE SCARCE AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES WHICH SUSTAIN OUR SMALL ISLAND ECONOMIES. IN THESE CONTEXT, I HOPE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD COME TO TERMS WITH OUR REALITY AND UNDERSTAND OUR PLEAS THAT DELAY IN TAKING THE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE IS A REAL THREAT TO OUR LIVELIHOOD AND SURVIVAL.

MR PRESIDENT

HAVING REFLECTED THE VERY VULNERABLE POSITION OF THE PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES WHICH ARE ALREADY EXPERIENCING IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, MY

DELEGATION IS APPRECIATIVE OF YOUR COUNTRY'S DECISION TO ACCEPT VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION. SIMILAR DEMONSTRATION OF LEADERSHIP IS GREATLY ENCOURAGED FROM OTHER PARTIES TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THIS GLOBAL CONCERN.

MR PRESIDENT

ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT, THE KYOTO PROTOCOL WILL BE SIGNED AND RATIFIED AS SOON AS THE INTERNAL LEGAL PRECEDURAL REQUIREMENTS ARE COMPLETED. PAPUA NEW GUINEA IS COMMITTED TO FULFILLING ITS COMMITMENTS UNDER THE CONVENTION AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL. PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAD ALREADY SET INTO MOTION THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK TO IMPLEMENT ITS COMMITMENTS, SUCH AS PREPARATION OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS. OUR FIRST NATIONAL COMMUNICATION IS AT THE FINAL STAGES OF BEING COMPLETED AND IT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES, EARLY NEXT YEAR.

MR PRESIDENT

FINALLY, I ONCE AGAIN URGE ALL PARTIES TO HAVE OPEN AND FRANK DISCUSSIONS AMONG PARTIES WITH A VIEW REACHING AGREEMENTS ON UNRESOLVED ISSUES UNDER THE KYOTO PROTOCOL AND THE CONVENTION. GIVEN THE FREQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS EXPERIENCED BY PAPUA NEW GUINEA, THE PACIFIC REGION AND OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR COUNTRIES TO RATIFY THE KYOTO PROTOCOL AND IMPLEMENT ITS COMMITMENTS WHEN IT ENTERS INTO FORCE AND ALSO COMMITMENTS UNDER THE CONVENTION TO GUARENTEE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR OURSELVES AND OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS

I THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT