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FIJI'S STATEMENT TO THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES TO THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE
CHANGE

KYOTO, JAPAN

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Delivered by H.E. Mr S. T. CAVUILATI, Ambassador, Fiji Embassy,
Tokyo, Japan

The President
Honourable Ministers
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
NGO Representatives
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr President,

Thank you for the honour and privilege to be able to address the
Third Conference of the Parties.

I bring with me the warm greetings of the government and people of Fiji, to
the government and people of Japan. We are grateful to the Leaders and
people of Kyoto for their hospitality and very warm welcome.

Mr President,

Our assembly here in Kyoto in great numbers attests to the importance and
significance with which we regard the issue of climate change and in
particular the seriousness with which we are going to give meaning and
advance our efforts in meeting the objectives of the Convention and

importantly in carrying out the essence and aspirations of the Berlin
Mandate.

Mr President,

Fiji also attaches great importance to environment and climate
change issues and to the Convention as the agreed instrument upon which
we place our hope to guide us in the overall protection and safeguarding of
our collective interests through global mitigation of the deleterious
effects of climate changes.

Mr President,

As the Conference heard yesterday from the Distinguished delegate of
Samoa and on behalf of the AOSIS group, we and indeed the other islands of
the globe are amongst the most vulnerable and would be amongst the worst
hit with serious devastating consequences if the increasing negative impacts
of climate changes are not immediately checked.

Mr President,

Fiji may be slightly bigger than most of our neighbours in the Pacific,
however our low-lying coastal areas with the coral reefs and the life forms
they protect and on which we subsist and base our tourism industry,

the mainstay of our economy, are now being threatened; we have had our share of drought and forest fires that have seriously affected the very little forestry we have and our tuna catches have shown a decline in the past two to three years certainly due to the effects of El Nino and increasingly being compounded by the unusual changes in the world's climate; and these are only three issues illustrations shared by many who have spoken before me.

Mr President,

When the survival of the fittest in economic terms appears to be the norm in this era of globalization, it is hard to reconcile the call for protection of the very basis of our survival and the apparent disregard of the various instruments that are supposed to safeguard our collective interests, by our own lack of appropriate actions or actions in pursuit of our own self-interests.

Mr President,

As a party to the Convention, Fiji, with her meagre resources have been putting in place both mitigating and adaptive measures with the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and our development partners, to all of whom we are most grateful. Undoubtedly such programmes or measures, shall continue notwithstanding the fact and the stark reality

that they will be a constant challenge and imposition upon our desire to upgrade the socio-economic well being of our populace. This will increasingly become a dilemma and dilemmas we indeed all have, and such, posed by the desire to balance our quest for economic growth whilst protecting our environment as best as we possibly can, will continue to tax us heavily.

Mr President,

Accordingly your Government's Kyoto Initiative as well as the assurances we have heard on the plausibility of enabling economic growth whilst protecting the environment with reduced emissions, should be commended and encouraged. Equally so, commitments in the Convention for technology transfer become all the more vital and urgent for us.

Mr President,

The sciences have warned us and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has brought matters closer to home with figures and expert opinion. Notwithstanding the apparent lack of responsibility and leadership in so far as the implementation of the Berlin Mandate is concerned, we shall continue nevertheless with present efforts, at mitigation and adaptation, uncertainty as most claim, a stimulant in our commitment

for continued action. But our efforts alone in these areas will be far from enough, in fact it is negligible in the light of the enormity of the problem we are facing. Its extent would undoubtedly require the genuine resolve by all the parties to the Convention to change the course of events, dismal and seemingly hopeless however it has been.

Mr President,

In this regard, the Berlin Mandate in our humble view has clearly and unequivocally, mapped out for all of us the most reasonable and pragmatic way forward recognizing the principles of common and differentiated responsibilities.

Mr President,

Our course in the months leading to Kyoto and now, culminating in the discussions of the past week, has indeed been very arduous and testing; and still there does not appear to be any sign of a light at the end of the tunnel.

At such a time as this, we can only implore our developed partners in the true spirit of goodwill and understanding, of compromise and cooperation, a step at a time, to once more take the lead and demonstrate true strength in having the courage to do the right thing by implementing their commitment as stipulated in the Berlin Mandate. By doing so you will be creating a sense

of confidence in those who are supposed to ~~follow~~ to follow suit.

Mr President,

Specified legally binding targets and time frames on reductions is a must in Kyoto. We believe in a 20% emission reduction of GHG to 1990 levels as the most appropriate targets to achieve. To delay is to aggravate the situation for the entire globe and the humanity it sustains and worse still, erode the confidence and the trust that we need so much in successfully facing together the global problems and challenges that we are increasingly being confronted with in this day and age.

Mr President,

Kyoto occupies a special place in the history of this great nation of Japan. With your leadership and the able support of Ambassador Estrada and the Conference, we can also place Kyoto in the annals of human history by tomorrow, one that will speak volumes to our future generations of the political will and the courage in 20th century humanity to work together as responsible stewards for their common good of their generations and the world they will inherit.

Thank you Mr President.