

TAGALOA
STATEMENT BY H.E. THE HON. ~~TUHALA~~ SALE TAGALOA, MINISTER
OF LANDS, SURVEYS AND ENVIRONMENT OF SAMOA, ON
BEHALF OF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES
BONN July 19, 2001

Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

We endorse fully the statement just made on behalf of the developing countries. The statement is a clear declaration of commitment to the Kyoto Protocol and firm resolve to bring it into force. We thank the distinguished Ambassador of Iran and his delegation for the leadership they provide, not only for the Group of 77 and China, but also for the negotiation process as a whole. We, in AOSIS, call for a matching quality of leadership from other groups.

Mr. President,

These negotiations have taken up a good part of the past six years. They have been among the most intense and complex in recent times. The AOSIS countries believe very strongly that we need to finalize the arrangements that must guide global action on climate change for the immediate future and beyond.

The Kyoto Protocol represents the international acknowledgement of the need for early and clearly targeted action. It sets agreed legally binding targets, and a framework for their performance. It includes a range of flexible options for achieving targets at the lowest economic cost, in part with the participation of the private sector and market forces. Many of these provisions were designed in close consultation with and in fact to satisfy the very countries that now seem to be turning against the Protocol.

Mr. President,

The Kyoto Protocol was a triumph in vision and endeavor, a vital investment in the future of humanity. We need to respect that achievement and move forward with the Protocol's operation and implementation. We believe it is imperative to recall that all countries gather here as Parties to the Convention, an international legal instrument that binds us individually, as it binds us together. The Convention commits us all to respond to the threat of global warming through precaution and not recklessness; through multilateralism and not unilateralism; through responsible global citizenship and not narrow self-interest; through leadership and not obstructionism. The Kyoto Protocol, built from the principles of the Convention, has rightly become the determinative test as to which countries are prepared to honor their commitments under the Convention, in the eyes of the parties and observers gathered here, and in the eyes of an expectant world.

Let me then assure you of the resolve and determination of all small island States to make every success of this resumed session of the sixth Conference of the Parties. For our

countries it is undeniably necessary to do so. There is no choice. We know and we can see the damage being done. The security of our territories is at risk, and the health and safety of our citizens have become real and priority issues. And let me say, Mr. President, that as far as we are concerned the science, as so clearly evident from the work of the IPCC, is overwhelming.

We acknowledge that this session is at a most critical moment. A range of difficult issues remains and must be resolved. A steadfast hold on old and known positions will not help. For our part we are resolved to do what we can to bring together divergent viewpoints, and to consolidate texts. I would need to say though that we continue to be most concerned about the efforts being made in a number of areas of the negotiations that are tantamount to re-negotiating the Kyoto targets. Undermining the global environmental effect and integrity of the Kyoto Protocol is something that we cannot accept.

Mr. President, we are concerned about the introduction of extreme positions that seem to be seeking to take advantage of current uncertainties. Such positions are untenable and do not build confidence among Parties. We have also articulated our concern over financial resources and the need for additional funds to undertake adaptation. This should not result in a draining away of ODA. We will require technical and financial resources to adapt, and the Convention and the Protocol must provide us with the necessary means. So far these financial resources have not been adequate and have not been provided in a timely manner. Let me also reiterate our strong arguments against the inclusion of nuclear power in the CDM.

More than ever, with an issue so global in reach, industrialized countries must assert and demonstrate their responsibility for leadership. We say that there are clear environmental, legal and moral grounds for the discharge of such responsibility without delay. The whole world is looking to this conference. They expect us to take the right decisions. It is our responsibility not to fail, and to act with courage and fortitude.

We are not unaware of the costs of taking action to tackle climate change. However, we cannot be blind to the potential ancillary benefits. There have been numerous studies to show the enormous potential for low-cost and no-regrets measures. Other studies and practical sense demonstrate that abundant economic gains can be made by forward-thinking, environmentally engaged economies. The failure to elaborate and implement these no regrets measures, including the opportunities available under the Protocol, is very worrying for our countries.

It is time for us to set the Kyoto Protocol in place to deal with climate change, that recognizes the urgency of the problem and that sets us on the right path. Thank you.