

REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS DELEGATION

THE TENTH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
ON CLIMATE CHANGE

**Impacts of climate change, adaptation measures and
sustainable development**

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HEAD OF FIJI DELEGATION

Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 16, 2004

Mr. Chairman

Hon Ministers

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Mr Chairman, since this is the first intervention of my delegation, I wish to convey our deep appreciation and gratitude to the Government and the people of Argentina for hosting the COP for the second time, including this 10th Session of the Conference of the Parties, and for the excellent arrangements that we are enjoying in this beautiful city of Buenos Aires.

Mr Chairman, in yesterday's plenary we reflected on the progress and achievements of the Convention after 10 years and the challenges we face in the years ahead. I wish to applaud all the interventions that were made particularly that which was made by Germany.

My delegation would like to celebrate this 10th year anniversary, and the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol in two months time. We acknowledge the hard work of the Secretariat and of all the well-intentioned people over the years, but we must be realistic and see things as they really are.

Mr Chairman, this climate change negotiation should be looked at from the broader context of all United Nation activities carried out in the past, today and into the future. The point I would like to make here is that, we in the Pacific have been doing our part to serve the needs of the UN.

For instance, Fiji, as a small island developing state, has served under the UN Peacekeeping Banner for over twenty years now, in Lebanon, Sinai, Kuwait, Bosnia and currently, as one of the very few countries that have answered the call of the UN to provide security for UN personnel in Iraq. We have sacrificed our lives to save others and we will continue to commit our brave men and women to the charter and ideals of the United Nations to bring peace and stability in the Middle East and other troubled areas of the world.

Mr Chairman, we have been answering the call of the UN and the needs of others for many years, and I am actually saddened and humiliated to note that the sacrifices we are prepared to make is not reciprocated. It is evident in this convention process that some of the Parties are resisting consideration of the interests of small island developing countries who are already being affected by climate change today, by insisting that response measures be included under the agenda of adaptation. Mr Chairman, they know exactly what that means, in terms of financial and resourcing assistance to small island countries like Fiji.

As already mentioned, the Pacific Islands are among the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. In addition, our economies cannot absorb the financial, human and environmental resource implications of climate change impacts. It is even more alarming to envisage that some of our islands may even be submerged or totally annihilated due to the imminent threats and destructive forces of climate change today and in the near future.

Mr Chairman, climate change is no longer an issue that allows the luxury of academic debates, long-winded negotiations and delay of long overdue actions. I really cannot emphasise enough the need to act responsibly now to accelerate adaptation actions to tackle climate change.

Mr Chairman, Fiji greatly respects the processes of this Convention but urgent and innovative ways must be found to liberate us (in particular Small Island Developing States) from those who are holding us ransom to the Convention process. We are the least equipped to take action in meeting the threats posed by climate change and our people need support and assistance. We are pleading to this convention process and the international community to be sympathetic to our need for adaptation implementation.

I wish to acknowledge on behalf of the Pacific region and its leaders the assistance provided by the Government of Canada for funding a pilot adaptation implementation project in four Pacific Island Countries. My country is one of the beneficiaries. Mr. Chairman, that is the sort of assistance that we need now and we urge and appeal to donor communities and implementing agencies to support us in our endeavour to make our societies more resilient to current and future climate change impacts. We need your support.

Let me thank you Mr Chairman for giving me the opportunity to make my intervention.

Thank you all for your attention.