GOVERNMENT OF TUVALU
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ENVIRONMENT, AND EXTERNAL TRADE & LABOUR

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Tuvalu Statement
at the High Level Segment
COP16/CMP6
Delivered
By Honourable Enele S Sopoaga, Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Environment, and External Trade and Labour

(Check Against Delivery)

Madam President
Distinguished Ministers
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the honour to speak on behalf of my Delegation, the Government and people of Tuvalu. First of all, I wish to thank the Government and people of Mexico for the hospitality and excellent arrangements for this meeting. The warm waters of the Caribbean remind me very much of home.

Addressing climate change calls for URGENT global actions by all countries. The whole world, its peoples, and all relevant stakeholders including development partners must share the ambitious vision and commitment to act diligently on solutions. Recognising its economic and technological capacity, and particularly its huge contributions to international cooperation on human development in many parts of the world, Tuvalu strongly supports the call for the inclusion and participation of the Republic of China/Taiwan, in the UNFCCC process.

Madam President

Last year we went to Copenhagen with high expectations that the international community would take decisive steps to address one of, if not the most, serious threats to humanity – climate

change. We were extremely disappointed with the outcome of Copenhagen. It is a tragedy to think that over a 110 heads of State could not unite to tackle climate change in a meaningful way. In Copenhagen, we rejected the Copenhagen Accord and we continue to do so. It is a hollow agreement to meet short-term political needs, certainly it is a document for the demise of nations like mine.

Tuvalu was keen to see a meaningful outcome in Copenhagen that, though small and limited our Delegation as we are, but as a contribution, we drafted our own version of a new protocol on climate change. Tragically, however, we were never able to have this proposal discussed.

This year, we have come to Mexico with renewed expectations that the international community will not repeat Copenhagen. We must unite in strong solidarity and be decisive on meaningful steps to address climate change.

Tuvalu seeks a clear mandate to continue the Kyoto Protocol and a new mandate to create a legally binding agreement to implement the Bali Action Plan. The two-track processes must result in two legally binding agreements. It is fundamental that the international community agrees to a comprehensive approach to addressing climate change. This can only be done by revitalizing the Kyoto Protocol and creating a new protocol for those countries not included in the Kyoto.

Madam President

Tuvalu's call for urgent, decisive and comprehensive actions on climate change is not self-serving. Undoubtedly, we are the most vulnerable country to the impacts of climate change. The greatest width of land on Funafuti, our capital island, is 600 metres. The highest point is only 4 metres. When a cyclone hits there are no mountains to climb or inland to run to – except the coconut trees. We are extremely exposed to ravages of climate change.

We see that many other countries are claiming that they are the most vulnerable. While clearly acknowledging that all countries are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, a small island,

coral atoll nation like Tuvalu faces enormous threats that could threaten the entire future of our nation, this was resoundingly echoed in the Executive Secretary's statement to this house yesterday. Is there any other country able to make this tragic claim? I think not.

As an LDC, moreover, the entire economy of our nation is threatened by severe weather events. Yet we have no means to rebuild our economy after such events. We desperately need an international mechanism to address loss and damage to create the necessary financial arrangements to insure our future.

Madam President

We have already heard in this very hall references to the Gap Report recently released by the UNEP, identifying actions required to bridge the gap between the totally inadequate emissions reduction pledges made in Copenhagen and the actions needed to ensure global temperature does not exceed 1.5' centigrade. My Delegation strongly urges Parties to seriously take into account the Gap Report findings and its recommendations in their negotiations. The Gaps identified, if not urgently filled, could well lead my nation Tuvalu and many like us to disappear.

One of the recommendations, Madam President, is to eliminate the lenient rules to land use change and forestry under the Kyoto Protocol. We cannot agree more. We cannot continue to give free gifts of hot air in this sector. My Delegation has been working tirelessly to tighten the rules and eliminate hot air. We certainly hope, other countries will also consider giving back free gifts on this critical issue of climate change.

Madam President

I must emphasize the importance of urgency. We cannot continue to stall our discussions. We cannot afford to have endless meetings and endless reasons for not doing anything. Most importantly, we cannot afford to be held hostage by countries finger-pointing on climate change, and the political backwardness of one large developed country. It is now time to act. Time to agree. Time to move forward. Time to save Tuvalu and the world. Thank you