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The Republic of Vanuatu

Statement by

THE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF VANUATU TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AMBASADOR DONALD KALPOKAS MASIKEVANUA

On the occasion of the High Level Segment of the 16th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change".

09 December 2010
Cancun, Mexico.

Madame President,

I congratulate you on your election to the COP Presidency and I assure you of Vanuatu's full cooperation in this important COP and CMP process under your oversight. I further thank the Government and the good people of Mexico for the wonderful hospitality accorded to my delegation since our arrival.

Madame President,

At the outset I wish to register Vanuatu's full endorsement of the statements made by Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), by Nauru on behalf of Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), and those statements made on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Madame President,

The sensitivity of the livelihood of my people and the economy of our country to the climate system is such that we are already experiencing the adverse effects of climate change and the sea level rise. This is happening against a backdrop of already existing steep costs related to our geography, market and trade isolation, coupled with our high exposure to natural disasters. These permanent vulnerable characteristics present to us significant challenges in meeting the full cost of adaptation to the effects of climate change and sea level rise.

Vulnerability to the dynamic effects of climate change presents a global challenge. It is for this reason that we must continue to collectively renew our confidence in the processes of this convention in order to build our resilience, achieve our sustainable development endeavours and to meet our Millennium Development Goals. In this respect we must renew our commitment to these processes to seek and achieve a second commitment period of Kyoto Protocol.

Madame President,

The emission reduction pledges so far since Copenhagen has been inconsistent with the 1.5 Degrees Celsius limit crucial for our survival according to the recently released UNEP GAP Report. This is of grave concern to my country. The urgent and considerable reductions to limit the growth of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to ensure global emissions peak by 2015 cannot be understated.

Emission reduction commitments must be commensurate with scientific rationalization. We need a reduction in atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations of CO2 to no more than 350ppm and for global temperature rise to be limited to below 1.5 Degrees Celsius. Countless lives and the economies of so many countries already being affected hinges on this urgent action.

Madame President,

In this light, Cancun must therefore, without failure, deliver through the 2 track approach, and a party driven process, the final ambitious architecture for concrete and decisive action on climate change this week for conclusion in Durban in 11 months.

Accordingly, a ratifiable legally binding agreement must take shape urgently in Cancun supported with a decision for a program of work leading to its adoption in Durban.

We further add our voice to the call for the establishment of an adaptation committee to oversee support and technical advice for adaptation under the convention and we call on the developing country parties to adequately resource existing adaptation financing mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of national adaptation priorities of the particularly vulnerable parties.

Given that the effects of climate change are already being experienced, we call for a decision on a mechanism for loss and damage that will facilitate adaptation and address recovery from climate extremes associated with climate change for particularly vulnerable countries here Cancun.

Climate change and poverty eradication must go together. For Small Island Developing States, this means our survival. Hence, financing, adaptation and mitigation action to keep global temperatures below 1.5 Degrees Celsius is of paramount importance to small islands.

We call on parties to engage this week in full and frank discussions and commit to achieve tangible outcomes for our further work.

In closing Madame President,

I must impress upon us all the urgency to act now and demonstrate genuine commitment based on the principal of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. People the world over are counting on our responsible leadership and political will to deliver. The innocent lives of many depend on the decisions we either make or fail to make here.

The climate related disasters this week that have ravaged parts of this very continent claiming lives and property underscores the urgency to act immediately and should give us the impetus to constructively advance progress this week and deliver concrete outcomes for adoption next year. Finally, Madame President I wish you every success in leading this conference to achieving its successful outcome here in this beautiful city of Cancun.

I thank you Madame President.