Statement delivered by
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President of the Republic of Nauru

At the High-Level Segment of the
COP22, CMP and CMA1

United Nations Climate Conference
Marrakech, Morocco, 15 November 2016

His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Kingdom of Morocco and its people for graciously welcoming us to this beautiful country.

From the outset, let me express Nauru's heartfelt sorrow to the government and people of New Zealand for the devastation and loss of lives caused by the recent earthquake.

Mr. President,

The international community entered 2016 riding high on the accomplishments of last year. Together, we had just concluded negotiations on no less than four historic agreements. The Paris Agreement was hailed as a diplomatic triumph.

Momentum continued to build this year as we rapidly approached the double threshold for its entry into force, and has culminated with today's opening of the CMA – a pace that exceeded all expectations.

A moment of celebration today is warranted, but for the most vulnerable among us, our tentative feelings of hope are matched by a profound sense of distress. As we all know, our collective aspirations as expressed in the Paris Agreement are not by our collective actions on the ground. The planet is headed for more than three degrees of warming, and every day that we delay action makes it more unlikely that we will achieve our goals.

Mr. President,

The international climate change negotiations have always struggled with an identity crisis. Are we negotiating based on the political realities of the large countries or the physical realities of the small? Are we here for the convenience of the powerful, or the very real crisis facing the vulnerable? Basic equity, justice, our common humanity *demands* that it be the latter.

Let me at this juncture take this opportunity to recognize the sterling effort of the Republic of China in making positive strides in addressing climate change issues. The Republic of China is a technological force that offers to share its prowess in light of the green technology it has developed for the goodness of all. By working together with the Republic of China, we all have much to gain, and much to lose if we chose to do so otherwise.

We cannot backslide on our progress!

Now is the time to breathe life into the Paris Agreement. We must approach work together with a renewed sense of urgency, but for vulnerable countries like Nauru, we fear that complacency has started to set in.

Addressing climate change is a multi-generational challenge that will require our sustained effort over the course of decades. It is inevitable that other important priorities will compete for our attention, and at times, a country may veer off course. Therefore, it is incumbent on us – when we gather here as Leaders – to provide the political direction necessary to see that the critical work we do here continues to move forward with urgency.

Fifteen years ago, we gathered in this iconic city and agreed to the Marrakech Accords. The work we accomplished here propelled the Kyoto Protocol forward to become the most important international climate treaty of the day. Once again, we are looking to Morocco for the leadership to accelerate implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Thank you.