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**23rd Conference of Parties  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

**Statement by Hon. Yosiwo P George  
Vice President**

**Bonn, Germany, 16 November 2017**

**Check against delivery**

Your Excellencies,  
Honorable J.V. Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, President of the COP 23,  
Executive Secretary Espinosa,  
Distinguished representatives of governments,  
Representatives of international and regional organizations, and observers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Greetings to you all.

**Excellencies,**

Two years ago, we met in Paris to renew our commitment to addressing the threat of climate change as a global community. The last two years, while our negotiators have worked diligently to chart the Paris Agreement's path forward, the number of devastating climate-related events around the world have increased.

Two years ago, Typhoon Maysak tore through the islands of Micronesia causing fatalities, damaging homes, crops, and public infrastructure, and causing millions of dollars in damage. Nearly 30,000 people, or almost one third of FSM's population, were affected, and rebuilding efforts are still ongoing. As typical of recent extreme weather events world-wide, this typhoon went on record as the most powerful pre-April tropical cyclone in the North-western Pacific Ocean.

Every year we witness record-breaking storms worldwide, floods, droughts, and other climate-related events.

We small islands developing states find ourselves in the unjust situation of the proverbial canary in the coal mine. With no exaggeration, we are at risk of losing our lands and disappearing from the face of the earth.

The tragedy is not only the precariousness of our survival, but that some nations, industries, and other powerful actors are failing to do their part, and in some cases are even moving backwards.

The increasing gravity of the situation requires our strength and resolve. We must be visionaries. We must be brave. And we must sometimes make decisions that will not please all interests, but will protect all people. That is leadership. That is responsibility.

**Excellencies,**

How many canaries will perish before we close down the coal mine? How many will perish before the many ambitions of this forum become actions? What will it take for climate investments to surpass fossil fuel subsidies and support?

It goes without saying that the small islands of the world never have nor will contribute substantially to the causes of climate change. The sum of all the small islands emissions in the world does not add up to even a fraction of each large, industrialized country's emissions.

Still, despite our small size, insignificant emissions, other development priorities, we are firmly committed to take every possible measure towards a low-carbon pathway. We are also committed to increasing global ambition and action by advancing initiatives in every forum where we have a voice or a role, such as our proposal to have the Montreal Protocol phase down HFCs, which resulted in the Kigali Amendment in that forum last year. Once implemented this single initiative promises to avoid anywhere from 0.5 to 1 degree temperature rise.

**Excellencies,**

The promise of the Kigali Amendment must be fully implemented, including by harnessing the potential mitigation in energy efficiency measures.

And yet, even this is not enough. Every country should be decarbonizing its energy systems with renewables and additional efficiency measures, as well as working to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, such as black carbon and methane.

We simply cannot slow down until we are well on our way to solving this complex and life-threatening problem. Micronesia will continue to do our part promoting consensus, proposing solutions, and transitioning our own development path to resolve the issue of climate change. And we implore all other countries – and especially the large emitters among you – to do more, to be bold and visionary with your leadership, and to take any and all measures to influence the path of your industries and societies to steer them towards a safer future for all.

**Excellencies,**

We hope that every time any of us see the word “FIJI” at the conference, we are reminded of the fragility of all islands – for we are like the songbird whose voice will be the first to fall silent should we fail at our task.

This small island nation urges every nation here to:

1. Strengthen your resolve to keep global temperature rise below 1.5.
2. Redouble your efforts to use every means possible to support climate protection.
3. Make a sincere promise to protect the countries and communities that are most vulnerable.
4. Support and encourage parties for an effective Talanoa facilitative dialogue.
5. Support the Adaptation Fund to serve the Paris Agreement.
6. Support the **Loss and Damage** to become a permanent agenda of the subsidiary bodies.

**And do not forget:**

To allow even one canary to perish – to sink below the rising seas or to be swept away by a violent storm – is a grave and *avoidable* injustice.

We must do all we can. And then we must do even more.

Thank you.