



TUVALU

**Statement
by
H.E. Honourable Saufatu Sopoanga
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Works and Energy
at:**

**The 14th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
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Check Against Delivery

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Excellencies,

Allow me the pleasure of thanking the Commission and UNDESA for facilitating our participation in this very important meeting. Tuvalu aligns itself fully with St Lucia's statement earlier in the week, and with the Pacific Forum statement to be delivered tomorrow by Papua New Guinea.

It is crystal clear from the reviews, especially that of the SIDS, that the need to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources is necessary and URGENT. Whilst appreciative of the SIDS review, we feel an ad hoc working committee on the MSI is necessary to allow for constant reviews of implementation.

For many like Tuvalu, UNLESS energy opportunities and environmental challenges of climate change are urgently addressed in a balanced manner, achieving our MDGs, sustainable development, and our very existence will be seriously compromised. We feel there is an urgent need for the establishment of a global fund for renewable energy.

Tuvalu is fully committed to taking full responsibility of our own sustainable development. The '*Te Kakeenga II*' our national sustainable development Strategy, formulated in 2004 with the full participation of island communities, NGOs, Government and all stakeholders, provides for the full integration of the goals of Agenda 21, the MDGs, JPOI, the Mauritius Strategy, and the Pacific Plan on sustainable development.

It also recognizes fully that oil prices in Tuvalu will keep on rising even above the current levels of 3-400% above world prices, and will consume up to 70% of our meager financial resources. This is simply unrealistic, unsustainable for our poor islands, and needing a new paradigm of energy.

Providing energy needs of ten thousand people may sound an easy task, but that is not the case. Our population is dispersed over nine small islands separated by considerable distances of ocean water. The social and economic costs to run ships, OR NOT TO RUN SHIPS, to cater for the sick children, women and rural communities on outer islands are exorbitant.

About 92% of the total households are connected to the diesel electricity grid requiring again transportation of expensive fossil fuels to these outer islands. It is imperative, therefore, that appropriate, affordable, and home-grown technologies of renewable energy sources are developed and used.

Our Strategy goal, therefore, is to increase the use of renewable energy in Tuvalu from the current 4 to 20% of energy sources by 2015, and we would very much welcome partnerships under the CSD process or bilaterally at a round-table meeting with donors to be held in Suva, Fiji end of next week. Towards the same end we would seek for flexibility and easy access to renewable energy facilities particularly for partnerships in atoll SIDS like Tuvalu.

A new energy paradigm is not only for affordability and poverty reasons. It makes absolute sense for environmental sustainability. Here I want to underscore in no uncertain terms that the adverse impacts of climate change caused by fossil fuels on SIDS like Tuvalu are real, immediate and devastating. As forewarned by the IPCC and recognized by the SG's report "In Larger Freedoms", adaptation for SIDS is a must, which should be supported by the industrialized countries.

We in SIDS urgently need, no more assessments and studies, but to implement Stage III adaptation projects in critical sectors like foreshores, freshwater sources, agriculture, and health. The experience of GEF with SIDS on expediting accessibility to funding will be critical for adaptation under its own 4th replenishment.

Moreover, the Adaptation Fund of the Kyoto Protocol must also be dedicated to the implementation of concrete adaptation projects in the most vulnerable countries. SIDS with higher risks to impacts, they need special window of funding for adaptation that is simple, flexible, and easy to access.

Adaptation alone is not enough. We need wider cooperation for all countries to reduce their domestic greenhouse gas emissions. We call on all States to ratify and fully implement the Kyoto Protocol, and for all States to take further urgent action to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions. Needless to note, Mr Chairman, any domestic savings we get from use of renewable energy will also be vital to fund adaptation activities on the ground.

The MSI Implementation, like adaptation, takes place on the ground in SIDS and calls for the full cooperation of all partners and stakeholders. The invaluable international contribution of partners and also of the Republic of China to many SIDS will be useful, and Tuvalu appreciates this support. There is a clear role for regional bodies such as in the Pacific to play.

There is also a need to integrate the MSI in all international and regional programmes, and the full participation of SIDS in the coordination, and the monitoring of the implementation of MSI. We need financial and technical resources also for capacity building on database and project formulation.

Finally, Mr Chairman, for Tuvalu and many SIDS in the Pacific, the UN cannot continue to be a 'faceless' actor on MDGs and sustainable development. We need the physical presence of the UN in Tuvalu if ever we are to achieve our MDGs, sustainable development and other UN goals. A UN office in Tuvalu will make a lot of difference for our far flung islands. Thank you.
