



REPUBLIC OF FIJI

**Statement by Fiji's Permanent Secretary for the Prime Minister's Office at
the Eighteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

**SIDS Day
(10 May 2010, New York)**

Mr Chairman,

Fiji aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the G77 and China, and those made by the Chairs of AOSIS and Pacific SIDS.

The evidence of negative impacts of climate change on the Pacific region are many and two of Fiji's close neighbouring countries, Tuvalu and Kiribati, are stark examples of that.

In the case of my own country, Fiji, the effects of changing weather patterns have been felt heavily by our people. The rate at which natural disasters, such as floods and hurricanes, have hit Fiji and their severity have increased markedly in the recent years. For the first time in 35 years, we experienced the devastation of a Category 4 cyclone in February this year, costing our economy more than F\$100 million.

In addition, Fiji was not spared from the impact of the global financial crisis, which forced our Government to devalue its currency by 20%. This in turn has had negative impacts on our economy and our people. Moreover, given Fiji's centrality in the South Pacific and special trade relations with its Pacific Island neighbours, those countries have been affected equally if not more.

For our part, a Strategic Framework for Change implemented from 1st July 2009, guided by the People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress, seeks to address all of the concerns and issues highlighted in the MSI.

The need for concrete action from our development partners in providing much needed resources to enable us to adequately meet these challenges is more critical now than ever before. Although there have been many pledges made in the recent past to assist small islands states, what Fiji and I'm sure the whole of AOSIS needs, is action. Time is not on our side. Our survival as island people and island nations depends on international cooperative action, a United Nations commitment to SIDS and our own commitment as island people. The time for decisive action is now.

I thank you Mr Chair.