



FJI MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

630 Third Avenue (7TH Floor)

New York, NY 10017

Tel. (212) 687-4130 Fax. (212) 687-3963

Email. mission@fijiprn.org

**Statement by Mr. Filimone Kau (Chargé d'Affaires)
during the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting of the 15th session of the
Commission on Sustainable Development
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Fiji fully associates itself with the statement presented by Tuvalu on behalf of AOSIS.

For Fiji, major environmental problems include deforestation, land degradation, air and water pollution, waste disposal, outdated legislation and its inadequate enforcement and limited public awareness.

Fiji has recently enacted an Environmental Management Legislation and the implementation of this legislation and related programmes will assist in addressing the problems highlighted above.

A major challenge though, in the implementing the EMA is the absence of accredited laboratories to carry out environment monitoring and impact assessments. Fiji has to rely on foreign laboratories which are very costly. Accredited laboratories will enable better environmental monitoring and enforcement in Fiji.

Fiji, as well as other Pacific neighbours, is experiencing drastic changes in weather pattern. Unusual spells of heavy torrential rain, followed by humid conditions and moments later by scorching sunshine are becoming frequent events. Flash floods early this year caused million of dollars of damage to homes, crops and infrastructure. We call on the development partners for assistance in the development of early warning systems.

The transport sector is a major consumer of imported petroleum fuels in the country. Efforts to reduce smoke emissions from vehicles include the

revision of the Land Transport Act to ensure that vehicles imported into the country meet a minimum standard of efficiency. We call on the international community to accelerate the development and transfer of proven technologies.

We also reiterate our call for the establishment of a global renewable energy fund to promote the development and use of renewable energy.

The impacts of climate change and sea level rise on our economy will be many folds. The frequency of tropical storms and hurricanes has great adverse impacts on agriculture and our tourism industries. Agricultural lands are on low lands and these are often flooded during heavy rain. Our tourism industry is concentrated on the coastal areas and these are under threats of sea level rise and tropical cyclones.

Impacts of climate change and sea level rise invariably affect all men, women and children. But the capacity to respond to climate change and sea level rise differ and the most vulnerable groups like our women and children will be the most affected.

Therefore, Fiji proposes that climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions incorporate the different needs and interest of women and men, particularly given the disproportionate impacts of natural disasters on women and other disadvantaged groups.

In addressing climate change and sea level rise, it requires an integrated approach and more importantly requires the commitment of national governments and regional agencies. We call on the international community to assist national governments in mainstreaming the implementation of climate change and sea level rise adaptation measures.

Thank you.