

HIGH LEVEL PLENARY STATEMENT

By Ms Yooree Lee on behalf of His Excellency Mr Billy Talagi, Minister for Natural Resources of Niue

Mr President,

I am honoured to present this address on behalf of His Excellency the Honourable Mr Billy Talagi, Minister for Natural Resources of Niue.

The Minister would like to express his sincere gratitude to the Government and people of France for hosting this Conference, particularly in light of recent events.

Mr President,

Climate risks continue to knock on Niue's door - tropical cyclones and droughts; earthquakes and tsunamis; disease outbreaks; and contamination of our only fresh water supply. We are vulnerable not only because we are isolated but because we are extremely limited in our capacity to manage and respond to these impacts. Our call for a long term temperature goal of below 1.5 degrees under the agreement is important; we rely on this limit for our livelihood, our homes, our history - the place we live and the only place we know.

Our people are determined to fight with the resources we have available to us. Niue is one of the least populated nations in the world, and with our limited capacity we have committed to ambitious mitigation targets. By 2020, 38% of Niue's electricity sector will have transitioned from fossil fuel to renewables for electricity. With additional support from the international community, Niue can do much more, but achieving higher goals requires clear and accessible financial and capacity support from our partners.

Our developed country partners must play a stronger role in providing the support required for an ambitious agreement. The people of Niue are resilient in nature, but must have further support to mitigate and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change as quickly as possible. This includes the need to address loss and damage associated with climate change; ensuring that scaled up climate finance is more accessible for countries like Niue which are highly constrained by capacity; and ensuring that the final Paris agreement reflects a spirit of cooperation and optimism.

Mr President,

The world is eagerly watching. If we walk away this weekend without a fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement to combat the growing impacts of climate change, the people of Niue and others like us will continue to be vulnerable.

The people of Niue and our friends in the Pacific will continue to fight, but there is only so much we can do alone. I call upon developed countries to step up to their obligations and look forward to a fair, ambitious and equitable agreement at the conclusion of COP21.

Thank you Mr President.