



GOVERNMENT OF TUVALU

**38th SESSION OF THE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE
GENERAL POLICY DEBATE**

**STATEMENT BY
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Salutations

Mr. President, Madame Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

It has always been an honor for me to participate in the General Conference. Let me first congratulate the organization on its 70th anniversary and Mr. President on your election to this very important post. I wish you every success in your new role.

May I also take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the outgoing President HE Mr. HAO Ping along with the Director-General, Madame Irena Bokova, for their unrelenting efforts to reform UNESCO towards the noble causes of peace and shared prosperity!

Mr. President

On behalf of the Government of Tuvalu, I would like to reiterate the importance that Tuvalu accords to its partnership with UNESCO. Indeed, our National Development Plan: TK2 recognizes the effect of climate change, youth developments, the inclusive of education and all its diverse forms, the development of the ICT sectors and the promotion of a world class culture, for the attainment of the ultimate goal of developed-country status.

Tuvalu continues to strive toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflected in Goal 13 that was announced at the United Nations in New York last September.

The Pacific World Heritage Action Plan (2010-2015) aims to “increase in-country capacity at all levels, inclusive of indigenous people to develop best practices, management plans and arrangements to ensure effective protection of Pacific heritage sites, in a way that takes into account and recognizes traditional knowledge and conservation practices for land, air and seas”. Within this Action Plan, Tuvalu had identified the following two actions as priority; *i) create World Heritage awareness and education materials for communities, and ii) hold training workshops in World Heritage for governmental agencies involved in cultural and natural heritage.*

Mr. President,

As a Least Developed Country (LDC) and one of the smallest Island Developing State (SIDS), Tuvalu is fully aware of its responsibilities under Agenda 2030 as we did with the MDGs. We are planning to host our National Summit to develop our next Development Plan (TK3) in the middle of this month. Our national priorities along with our Framework for Pacific Regionalism will be aligned to the Inter-Regional Agenda of the SIDS SAMOA Pathway and mainstreamed to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

At the outset, sea level rise is certainly a familiar topic among the 10,000 inhabitants of Tuvalu, a string of nine low-lying atolls and reef islands in the central Pacific Ocean. Early in March this year Tropical Cyclone Pam (TC-Pam) devastated Tuvalu, given its low elevation and small in size, the devastation were significant and cross sectorial. This confirms our vulnerability to the increasing occurrences and severity of natural disaster. On that note, Tuvalu welcomes external assistance to address the adverse aftermaths of TC-PAM.

In conclusion, Tuvalu reaffirm its commitment to working with UNESCO at a sub-regional, regional and international level to achieve the goals of the Organization and contributes to sustainable development through supporting SIDS resilience in the face of environmental degradation and change, including climate change, an impact on oceans, freshwater, biodiversity and natural resources by drawing upon the strengths of the intergovernmental scientific programmes (IHP, IGCP, IOC, MAB, MOST) and building synergies between scientific and indigenous knowledge.

Thank You For The Opportunity.

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