



**Pacific Energy Summit Speech
Auckland, 26 March 2013**

**Speech by
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Good morning to all of you on another beautiful morning here in the Pacific.

Dear Pacific Leaders,

I have now spent a week travelling with you – first at the Leader’s Summit in Tonga and now here – and I must say it has been quite a lesson for me to listen, and learn, about the opportunities for renewable energies in the Pacific region.

I would like to share three conclusions that I have drawn from this week of listening and learning. Perhaps these may be self-evident, but I think, important to underscore.

The first conclusion is based on what we have heard from speaker after speaker, whether from an international organisation, from national governments or from the private sector: that the transition to renewable energies makes eminent economic sense from a domestic perspective. I underline that it make sense from a domestic perspective because it allows the Pacific islands to make the best use of your abundant natural resources, to make the best use of your less abundant national budgetary resources, and furthermore it is the best investment to protect your competitiveness in a tourism industry that is becoming more and more demanding, not just for eco-tourism but for low-carbon tourism. There is no doubt that the transition toward renewables makes much sense from the point of view of your national economies.

Secondly, what I have learned from all of you is that there is no magical solution. There is no quick fix. There is no one size fits all. Yes, there are very clear regional communalities, but the national differences between one island and the other demand island specific solutions.

My third conclusion is that this can be done; with vision, with leadership, with commitment and above all with smart and strategic partnerships. Not only do we already have successful examples that have been discussed here in Auckland and in Tonga, but in fact this very conference is living up to Minister McCully’s call to not let “the process kill the outcome”, and to finalize today with concrete results and

concrete projects moving forward. I have no doubt that the Pacific can breed success in the transformation toward clean, affordable, accessible energy.

Now, the question that I have in my mind after making these conclusions is: how can the Pacific region leverage its own commitment to renewable energy in order to accelerate the transformation that needs to occur at the global level. It is critical for the island states to consider how to accelerate the global transformation toward clean technologies because the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) alone cannot bend the curve of global emissions. It is in other regions that the major transformation needs to take place. At the same time, there is hardly a group of countries in the world that are more vulnerable to the present increase in global emissions as are the SIDS.

The Prime Minister of Cook Islands yesterday spoke about the “energy tug of war” on the Cook Islands. I pick that flag up, and I say the tug of war is happening not just on the Cook Islands, not just on every one of the islands, it is happening on a global scale. And it is very clear that we have a marked urgency for one side to win and it is the clean energy side. It is precisely that outcome of that global tug of war that actually will determine the survival of the small island states.

Fortunately in this global tug of war we already have some good signals of what is going to be the outcome: we already have 1 trillion dollars of investment into renewable energy; we have decreasing costs and grid parity in many countries, we see increasing pace of innovation; and perhaps most importantly, financial institutions are growing more and more comfortable with the financing of renewables.

The transformation at the global scale towards renewable energy needs three levels of integrated action. It needs action of the private sector, and we have heard many examples of what the private sector is doing here in the Pacific. It needs national policies and measures, and we have heard what some of the islands are already putting in place. In addition, there are currently thirty countries outside of the SIDS that have comprehensive climate legislation, as well as over one hundred countries that have renewable energy legislation.

The third level of integrated action is the international framework. We need the international framework because it provides the unequivocal guidance on the direction that the global economy needs to take toward a low carbon economic growth model. Here we also have some good news: we do have a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. And we have a commitment toward a 2015 agreement. A lot of work needs to be done between now and 2015 to allow that agreement to be undertaken. But some of that work is being done here right now: the global agreement is helped by you, and others, standing up to the challenge and showing how this transformation takes place.

My call to you today, dear friends, is to use the voice the voice of the SIDS as a clarion call. Traditionally, in the climate negotiations, the SIDS have used their voice to flesh out all of the urgent, critical, indispensable details of adaptation and loss and damage. Do not let up on that. You have to continue that. But my urge today is that in addition to using your voice on adaptation, you use your voice to bring in the transformation toward renewable energy. I urge you to use your voice to address the

root of the problem –the root of the problem is not adaptation, that is what we have to do in view of the inevitable effects of climate change, but the root of the problem is the slow pace with which we are pursuing the transformation toward renewable energy.

I urge the SIDS to use your voice to bring about that commitment at the global scale that you already have here at the domestic level. You can use your commitment to domestic transformation to inspire, to motivate, to accelerate the global transformation toward renewable energy, toward energy efficiency, toward access to clean energy. You can help to create the new norm, the new norm of low-carbon development and growth.

Let me finalize here by sharing a little secret with you. The Pacific Islands have a golden card in your hand this year: you have the chairmanship of the G77. This is no small event. The G77 was created in 1970. Since 1970, never has a small island Pacific nation led the developing countries under the United Nations. This is the first time: this year Fiji leads the G77.

My dear friends, this is just not an enormous responsibility. This is a ground breaking opportunity. I urge all Pacific nations and their colleagues in the Caribbean to use your chairmanship in the G77 wisely, to use it powerfully. I urge you to lead not by promise, not by intent, but rather by the power of your successful example.

Thank you.
