

## Call to show more ambition and to move faster together on climate change

16 Nov, Bonn (Perna Bomzan) – The opening of the high-level segment of the climate talks in Bonn presided over by Fiji, saw world leaders calling on all Parties to show more ambition and to move faster together on climate change.

The **UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres**, called for “more ambition” and said that Parties “must go further and faster together” and said that on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol (KP) and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Parties who have not done so should ratify the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol (KP) (to give effect to its second commitment period).

He also called on “world leaders to ratify and implement the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol to phase down the use of hydrofluorocarbons, which destroy the ozone layer”. Guterres stressed that at least a further 25% cut in emissions (based on 1990 levels) is needed by 2020.

The high-level segment began on 15 Nov with about 25 Heads of State and Government and over 100 Ministers who have come to the climate talks under the UNFCCC, the KP and the Paris Agreement (PA).

**Fijian Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama**, at the opening event, gave the floor to “a special child” Timothy Naulusala, who had travelled all the way from Fiji to share his story. Bainimarama said that he wanted to present the human face and dimension of climate change and said no one could do that better than a child.

**Naulusala** shared how his life was in chaos when hurricane Winston hit his island last year, which he said was the strongest in the southern hemisphere. He called for leadership and action saying that climate change deserves to be a huge priority. He referred to former United States (US) President Obama who had said that climate change “is happening here, and is

happening now” and urged world leaders “to walk the talk,” and that “it is time to move forward and to walk together.”

**Bainimarama** then took the floor to say that “future generations are counting on us like Timothy and we hear his cry, we hear his plea” and that is why Parties are here in Bonn.

The Fijian Prime Minister said that he felt a great sense of history as the first leader of a small island developing state to preside over a COP (the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC). He recalled the history of tackling climate change starting in the late 1980s with the formation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); leading to the negotiation of the mother agreement, the UNFCCC signed in Rio in 1992; achieving the landmark agreement, the Kyoto Protocol (KP) with major reduction targets in 1997, and reminding about its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary next month. Then, after several COPs, the historical breakthrough in 2015 with the Paris Agreement (PA), which had come into force in 2016 by COP 22 and now COP23, which is crucial for the implementation phase of the PA.

He reminded Parties that with only two days left, deliberations must conclude on time and that there has been progress in many negotiating terms with key decisions ready to be adopted, highlighting the decision on pre-2020. (See TWN Update 15.) He said Fiji has been very proud to lead the process and to bring its culture to Bonn including in framing the upcoming 2018 Talanoa dialogue (referring to the facilitative dialogue next year).

**UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres** said that it was fitting that this year’s conference is led by Fiji, a nation on the frontlines. “In the battlefield, when the frontline is decimated, the whole army is lost. And the same would happen to the planet with climate change”.

“We need to do more on five ambition action areas: emissions, adaptation, finance, partnerships and leadership”. Guterres stressed that at least a further 25% cut in emissions is needed by 2020 citing that the latest UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report shows that current pledges will only deliver a third of what is needed to stay in the safety zones of the PA. The window of opportunity to meet the 2°C target may close in 20 years or less and there may be only 5 years to bend the emissions curve towards 1.5°C. He said that there has been a start on decoupling emissions from economic growth and that massive economies such as China and India are on track to surpass their Paris pledges. “It is crucial for all countries to follow through on their Paris commitments”.

With regard to adaptation as the second area of ambition, he said that the Green Climate Fund (GCF) can play a catalytic role and appealed especially its donor members to bring the mechanism fully to life. On finance, he stressed that greater ambition on emissions, adaptation and resilience is inextricably linked to funding and hence, the need to mobilize the agreed USD 100bn annually for developing countries. “Upholding this promise is essential for building trust and confidence,” stressed the UNSG.

He further said that markets need to be re-oriented away from the counter-productive and the short-term, when in 2016, an estimated USD 825bn were invested in fossil fuels and high-emissions sectors. “I will be working to scale up international financing in renewable and energy efficiency projects to reduce at least 1 gigaton or more of carbon emissions by 2020”. Infrastructure investment would be crucial and the world should adopt a simple rule: if big infrastructure projects are not green, they should not be given the green light. “Investing in climate-friendly development is where the smart money is needed”.

He stated that carbon pricing is a key instrument for driving down greenhouse gas emissions and more than half of the nationally determined contributions of the PA cite the need for it. In 2016, carbon pricing initiatives generated USD 22bn but to reach the Paris goals, at least 50% global coverage and a higher price on carbon is needed to drive large-scale climate action.

On partnerships as the fourth ambition action, “partnership – with the private sector, local and regional governments and civil society – will make or break efforts to implement the PA”. “In particular, the only way to keep below 2°C and as close as possible to 1.5°C is to mobilize the private sector to move on an

energy transformation”. He stressed on the need to engage global technological giants, the oil and gas sector and the automotive industry so their business plans are consistent with the Paris goals, including the need to engage the agricultural and forestry sectors to ensure climate friendly land use.

On the fifth ambition action, he highlighted the “need for heights of political leadership” and encouraged Parties to be bold in their deliberations and decisions in Bonn as well as at home. “More immediately – in this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the adoption of the KP and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the UNFCCC, I call on all relevant nations that have not done so to ratify the Doha Amendment” and on “world leaders to ratify and implement the Kigali Amendment to phase down the use of hydrofluorocarbons, which destroy the ozone layer”.

German President **Frank-Walter Steinmeier** said that climate change impacts are felt more year by year being the cause for crisis and strife and hence, this dramatic and urgent situation requires all to hurry up and act with resolve. He stressed that in this scenario, the fast growing economies play an important role as they are among the largest emitters, singling out China having a long way to go. Paris would be a breakthrough only if the agreement is followed by deeds, he said, adding that in recent years, important milestones have been reached like the PA, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 and these success stories with occasional disappointment along the path are worth the effort.

President of the **UN General Assembly Miroslav Lajcak** expressed delight in a small island nation presiding the COP, referring to how it is representative of people who are constantly wondering if and when their communities are swallowed up by the sea. He said climate change is different from the threats which faced humanity when the UN was created and that it can only be abated through multilateral agreement and action. The PA in 2015 was the biggest multilateral event for climate change in history and “this agreement will not be renegotiated”. He stated that only two months ago at the UNGA, he saw the highest number of reference of climate change on record, 84% highlighting it as priority.

He further stressed that “putting words on paper is one thing, acting is another” and therefore, action is needed urgently sticking to the agreements made. He also referred to the UNEP Emissions Gap Report, which validates that current pledges will not be sufficient to keep temperature below 1.5°C and in fact, not enough

even for the baseline commitment of 2°C which makes the situation unacceptable. With alarming rate of climate change impacts, there comes the need for both, mitigation and adaptation and the shrinking finance is a clear message that it is not sufficient. “We must agree to the goal of USD100bn by 2020 to support action in developing countries,” adding that “we have common but differentiated responsibilities.”

Following the opening segment, several leaders spoke.

German Chancellor **Angela Merkel** said that the common message is to protect our planet and hence, the need to stand by the PA. The need is to stand together to implement it, and “that is the rulebook on which the Conference is working”, she said.

She further stated that in Europe, efforts are being made to reach emissions reduction target of “40% by 2020 which is a legally binding obligation and we will do it”. The European Union (EU) member states have agreed on how to reach this common goal with necessary rules, for e.g. on emissions trading, the instrument being orientated towards serving the goal.

Merkel said that in Germany, they have planned medium- and long-term strategy to underpin greenhouse gas neutrality by concrete measures aligning with 2020, 2030 and 2050 timelines. She referred to the current talks in building the new government as being crucial with social issues on the top of the agenda such as relating to employment and that important conflicts need to be resolved in a calm and reliable manner. “We still use a lot of coal, particularly lignite, and coal needs to be given particular attention”.

She said, “during the G7, we affirmed on a path of decarbonisation” as industrialised countries have a specific contribution to make with necessary technology capacity. She also said that “we also have a historical responsibility to reduce emissions” and have already contributed to this adding that the G20 energy action plan is also for more sustainable goals. She stressed on initiatives guided by a transformation for energy, referring to a broad alliance of number of companies in the US with a commitment called America’s pledge, irrespective of Trump leaving the PA. “Renewable energy is our strongest pillar of energy mix” in Germany for which there is growing support and there is no need of subsidizing it any more.

She also mentioned about creating necessary conditions to mobilize private finance and referred to the meeting next month in Paris, hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron.

With a growing world population, increasing conflicts over natural resources is inevitable and hence, she said that Germany has asked the UN Security Council to focus more on security aspects of climate change. She also referred to the provision of €100million to the least developed countries (LDCs) to help adaptation. The German Chancellor urged everyone to do his or her part, accepting PA as a starting point and to match words with deeds, showing the necessary courage and good will.

French President **Emmanuel Macron** said that climate change adds injustice to an unfair world, focusing its effects to the already underprivileged and therefore, by far “the most significant struggle for which all must come together to establish ambitious goal.” “The PA is a starting point which we are determined to observe,” he added.

He stated that at the international level, scientific work is vital and the IPCC is a major component of this work. This, he said, was however threatened today by the US decision to not give funding to the IPCC. He proposed that “Europe replace the US” in this regard and appealed to member states to come together to compensate for the lack of US funding so that by 2018, it will have all the money it needs. Macron further mentioned about the climate finance meeting in Paris next month which has the goal of mobilizing public and private funds; a collective goal to compensate for the US gap and for innovative financing that will allow transformation of international assistance for adaptation to vulnerable countries who desperately need it.

The French President elaborated on priorities to reduce greenhouse gas reductions in Europe with bilateral cooperation between Germany and France on renewable energy throughout Europe; the need for carbon “border tax” to protect the EU industries and economic interests against countries that do not respect its climate goals; integrate environmental goals into trade and while negotiating trade agreements, not to enter with countries who do not respect these goals. He also said that France has a new commitment to withdraw from fossil fuels and to transform energy model; banning all new permits for exploitation of hydrocarbons, and a decision to close all coal-fired stations by 2021.

“We need European partnership to accelerate the closure of nuclear power stations.” Macron added that “we are not stepping back from our commitments” and “rich countries have a dual responsibility since we

have been a part of the climate change problem”, he said in conclusion.

Many other world leaders also addressed the high-level segment, which continues in the remaining two days of

the climate talks, as negotiators try to iron out last minute hitches on the remaining matters dealing with issues related to finance.