



**ADDRESS BY AMBASSADOR DEO SARAN, FIJI'S AMBASSADOR TO
THE EUROPEAN UNION AND CLIMATE AMBASSADOR**

at

EU FOR TALANOA CONFERENCE

European Commission
Brussels

Wed June 13 '18

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula Vinaka!

I'm very pleased to have been asked to speak to you on behalf of the COP-23 Presidency and extend the warmest greetings of the COP-23 President and Prime Minister of Fiji, the Honourable Frank Bainimarama.

He has asked me to especially convey to you Fiji's warmest thanks for the manner in which the European Union has embraced the Talanoa Dialogue as an important vehicle to raise ambition in the fight against climate change.

As most of you will already know, we have brought to the UN system a Pacific concept of reaching collective decisions through inclusive dialogue and consensus building.

The Talanoa Dialogue is **not** an exercise in finger pointing or for the exercise of naked power in which winners take all. Instead, it is about the respectful exchange of ideas and best practices to reach decisions for the common good, in this instance, acting to preserve the health of the planet that we all call home.

It is also not a **talkfest**, merely to give the participants a warm inner glow. As in the Pacific, where talanoa is expected to produce outcomes, the world expects the Talanoa Dialogue **to deliver** - to **produce concrete action to raise the ambition** of our Nationally Determined Contributions and other efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that must be at net zero in just a few decades.

Because we must all be very frank with each other about where our current NDCs are taking us. Not warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial age - that is the most ambitious target of the Paris Agreement - But an increase of least 3 degrees by the end of the century. With all the catastrophic consequences that would entail! The loss of whole nations, widespread shortages of food and water, hundreds of millions of displaced persons and the breakdown of the international order as nations go to war over increasingly scarce resources.

Excellencies, the multilateral consensus for decisive climate action has been under threat for some time. And at the G7, we have just witnessed fresh strains in the current global arrangements and long-standing relationships.

Yet now, more than ever, the entire global community must stand shoulder to shoulder to confront the climate threat. And embark together on the journey we must all make towards **net zero carbon economies by 2050**, embracing all the opportunity that presents for enduring prosperity as we develop new technologies, cities and communities that are clean and more resilient.

It **cannot** be done by national governments alone, which is why the Talanoa Dialogue embraces **states, regions and cities, civil society** and the **private sector** and billions of ordinary citizens – the Grand Coalition that Fiji has done everything it can to help forge as COP President. And we look to this process to bring together our best minds and brightest ideas, to share best practices, and to reach the consensus we need to reach on **more ambition, more decisive action**.

Excellencies, above all we need **political will**. As you know, the deadline for contributions to this Talanoa process through the UNFCCC portal is **October 29**. And after that, at COP24 in Katowice in December, will come the political phase of the Talanoa Dialogue.

The COP parties coming together under the stewardship of Fiji and Poland to decide what needs to be done to raise ambition in our NDCs. And going back to their capitals to start delivering that ambition before and beyond 2020.

There is no room for failure at Katowice. We do not have the luxury of time. It is critical that this initiative succeeds. Which is why the COP23 Presidency **appeals to the whole world** to seize this opportunity to build on the achievements of the Paris Agreement and put the climate struggle on a new and more ambitious course.

Excellencies, Fiji **commends the European Union** for its own commitment to climate action and the Talanoa Dialogue in particular, which is **embodied in this gathering and for which our Presidency is most grateful.**

The world looks to the nations of Europe for leadership, and especially at this time of uncertainty, to do everything possible to increase your own NDCs. To use your influence in **multilateral forums and your bilateral relationships to encourage others to pursue more ambition.** And for Europe to give the **policy signals, finance and guidance** that enable bold investments in new technology that will pave the way to a prosperous, zero carbon future by 2050.

Excellencies, we hope that your commitment to the Talanoa Dialogue **will be replicated elsewhere** and that this gathering is a springboard to more momentum in the **many talanoas being held around the world**. Our own Pacific Talanoa Dialogue will be held at the Climate Action Pacific Partnership event in Fiji next month; generating more momentum towards the Talanoa Dialogue at the Global Climate Action Summit in California in September; cascading into more action at Climate Week during the UN General Assembly in the same month; and producing **unstoppable momentum** for **more ambition all the way to COP24 and beyond**.

Excellencies, thank you for the opportunity to address you and I want to close by quoting what our Prime Minister and COP23 President said at the last UN General Assembly, which is as relevant now as it was nine months ago.

“Global warming challenges us to understand that the only way for every nation to put itself first is to lock arms with all other nations and go forward together. Anything else is self destructive – for the world and for each nation.

“If we view this as some sort of negotiation in which each country tries to preserve its narrow national interests, we will **all lose**. We will be powerless to protect our own people from the consequences of climate change. Collective action is the only way forward. And wise men and women will understand that”. unquote

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the world looks to the wise men and women of Europe and all other nations to lead this struggle. So let us bring all of our collective wisdom to build the political momentum for ambition, in making the Talanoa Dialogue the success it needs to be, for the sake of every single person on earth.

Vinaka vakalevu. Thank you.