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Honourable Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga, excellencies, government representatives, colleagues from regional and international organisations, media representatives, ladies and gentlemen a very good morning to you all.

Getting a good Paris Agreement has long been of huge importance to the European Union, and now successful implementation is of equal importance. That is why we were keen to support this conference.

We started lobbying for a COP21 agreement that we knew the world needed well over a year ago, taking as a starting point the European Union's strong track record in fighting climate

change within its own borders. We did this through with an intensified climate diplomacy effort deployed all over the planet.

In the Pacific we concentrated on building a strong alliance with our partners. We knew that the European Union and the Pacific Island countries saw eye-to-eye on how to deal with nearly all challenges related to climate change. We knew we would be stronger in Paris if we prepared together, if we showed solidarity, and if we led from the front. We determined that our ambitions should prevail at COP21, not the lesser ambitions of others.

Thus the European Union was present and engaged in every single event in the Pacific related to COP 21. From Nouméa in the framework of Oceania 21, where the Lifou Declaration was issued, to Levuka during the Fiji Annual Climate Change Summit, to Apia for the SPREP Climate Change Round Table, to the PIDF Summit in Suva, when the very influential Suva Declaration was agreed, a declaration that mirrored a large number of the European Union's goals for Paris. I took part in discussions in Kiribati on climate change and migration with PM Sopoaga, President Anote Tong, and Prince Albert of Monaco.

Very importantly, the European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias-Cañete, was present at the Pacific Island Leaders meeting in Port Moresby in September. We had intense discussions one-by-one with the Pacific's climate change champions – with PM Sopoaga, with President Tong, with Minister Tony de Brum of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Commissioner Arias-Cañete addressed the leaders in plenary.

The purpose of all this engagement was quite simple: to seek joint strategies for Paris, and to convey the EU's commitment and readiness for the highest level of ambition.

And all of this hard work paid off. A historic agreement on climate change was reached in Paris. 150 Heads of State and Government delivered the long-awaited bridge from today's policies towards decarbonising the global economy and achieving climate resilience in the course of the century.

The Paris Agreement represents a success for France, the European Union, the United Nations, and for multilateralism. Above all it is a huge success for the Pacific Island Countries, whose voice was heard. The Pacific did a great job at COP21. The Paris Agreement brings about ambition, commitment and solidarity.

Of course there were disagreements and even irreconcilable positions, but a moment came where it was clear that joining forces make us stronger.

And the "High Ambition Coalition" played an important role in this. What started as a small group back in May 2015 in Berlin ended up bringing together the biggest players and the smaller developing countries, including the Pacific SIDS. Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Tony de Brum chaired the High Ambition Coalition and European Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete played a leading role, and they were not the only ones to take this very important initiative forward. It became an unstoppable train, picking up travellers on its way, fellow travellers who knew that the world would not get another chance to get an agreement that would start to turn the tide against climate change.

Thus the High Ambition Coalition made a solid show of unity and strength and rallied a broad alliance in support of ambitious outcomes. In the end, the High Ambition Coalition played a

key role in the transformation of the failure of Copenhagen into the success of Paris. I recall the emotional moment capture on TV of the High Ambition Coalition, led by Minister de Brum of the Pacific and Commissioner Arias Cañete of the EU, entering the plenary room at the end of COP21 to huge applause.

The decisive role played by French presidency before and especially during COP is hard to overstate. The Agreement owes a lot to French team and especially to Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius.

Ambassador Djokovic has already mentioned the main features of the agreements. I do not want to repeat what he said, but I want to highlight one of the main aspects for the EU: solidarity

The solidarity package includes notably provisions on climate finance and on addressing needs linked to adaptation and loss and damage from climate change impacts. Developed countries will continue their collective mobilisation goal of USD 100bn/year up until 2025; a new and higher collective goal is to be set by 2025.

The EU and its Member States are major providers of climate finance – delivering EUR 11 billion/FJD 25 billion in 2013 alone. Almost half of all pledges to the Green Climate Fund came from EU Member States. Public finance – from the EU and other countries in a position to provide finance – will continue to be important. The donor base has to be widened, provided that recipients of climate finance ensure the right conditions for attracting investment are in place.

The EU has shown that it is a close partner of the Pacific not only in climate change negotiations. We are also a key partner in terms of finance. We have around EUR 250 million of FJD 600 million of grant money invested in climate- and disaster-related projects. Additional funding will come as soon as decisions are taken on future allocations to support of the implementation of the Paris agreement.

The historical Paris agreement would have never been possible without the effort of so many groups of people: scientists, technicians, politicians, diplomats, civil society, public and private sector. Working together we have been able to reach an impressive level of ambition.

Looking forward to the signature of the agreement, we cannot forget however, that Paris has left a wide range of technical issues open, including detailed provisions on transparency and accountability, low-carbon strategies for 2050, the follow-up of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda and technology mechanisms.

I take this opportunity to commend the Fiji Parliament for its decision last week to ratify the Paris Agreement. As an important player in the Pacific, Fiji is leading with example in the fighting climate change in the Pacific and the EU stands shoulder to shoulder with its Pacific partners in the fight against climate change.

Yesterday, 15 February, the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union, which represents all 28 Member States and the EU's 500 million inhabitants, discussed, among other issues, the follow up to COP21. I would like to quote a couple of sentences from the conclusions of the meeting, which illustrate the EU's commitment to support the most vulnerable countries and

populations and to ensure that adequate attention is given to human rights and gender equality in fighting climate change:

"The Council recognises climate change as a contributing factor to migration resulting from state fragility, insecurity and resource scarcity.....One of the key aspects of the EU climate diplomacy should be practical support for mitigation and adaptation policies in third countries through the implementation and update of INDCs."

"The EU will continue to advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights also in the context of climate change and climate diplomacy. In this regard, the Council also recognises the importance of ensuring women's full, equal and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making. Evidence shows that gender equality, women's empowerment and women's full and equal participation and leadership in economy are vital to achieve sustainable development, including climate change adaptation and mitigation."

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to work hard in 2016 on the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The Pacific Island Countries can count on full support from the European Union. We are ready for the new endeavour. Let's move forward together.

Thank you for your attention.