



**World Summit on Food Security**

**Rome, Italy**

**17 November 2009**

**Statement by the Prime Minister of Fiji,  
Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama**

**Mr Chairman,**

**Your Majesties,**

**Your Excellencies,**

**Heads of States and Governments,**

**Director General of the FAO,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is indeed a privilege for me and my delegation to participate in the World Summit on Food Security. Mr Chairman I congratulate you on your appointment. I wish to recognise and thank the government and people of Italy for their warm hospitality. I also extend my government's appreciation to the Director General of the FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf and his staff on their facilitation and coordination of this Summit.

Mr Chairman, we are again at the crossroads to deliberate over one of the greatest challenges of our time, the injustice of widespread hunger and food insecurity.

Despite the goal set at previous Summits and related forums to halve world hunger by 2015, as well as the scientific advancements made in food production and research, and increased cooperation between different multilateral agencies, widespread hunger and food insecurity remains a major problem and challenge.

Indeed with the recent economic crisis, fuelled in the developed world and its consequent and disastrous effects on livelihoods, world commodity and fuel prices, natural disasters and climate change have made food security even more tenuous, and, widespread hunger even more extensive.

In mid-October 2009, my Government convened a National Food Summit. The Summit brought together stakeholders from government, the private sector, and civil society to discuss the global economic phenomena, its impact on hunger and food security and the measures that Fiji should put in place to mitigate the risks.

Fiji recognises that co-ordination between the public and private sector including civil society groups is crucial to any successful strategy in particular to have an impact at the micro level while increasing output on a commercial basis, also.

To this end my Government has embarked on a land reform program which shall result in more land being available for productive use. The reform shall result in tracts of vacant communally owned indigenous land and state land being made available at market rates on long term lease in particular for agricultural purposes and other productive use.

Indeed the National Food Summit recommended that agriculture must be given priority by inter alia empowering the rural, subsistence and small holder farmers which is to be complemented by investment in supportive infrastructure.

My government is focused on this strategy. This objective is included in our road map set out in the document titled *Fiji's Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio Economic Development (RDSSED) 2009 – 2014*.

In addition to such initiatives my government has recently approved the Food and Safety Decree that sets out in detail various measures to be adhered to and implemented that will stop the production and more importantly, the importation of substandard and unhealthy foods. The non-availability of unhealthy foods in the market and focus on healthy foods, which can be grown locally, results in intake of nutritious food and security of supply.

For the people of Fiji, the rest of the Pacific and other low lying regions in the world, it is most appropriate that this Summit also has

a dedicated session on climate change. Rising sea levels affect not just the food security of these vulnerable economies, but it puts into doubt the very existence of these regions.

Unmitigated climatic changes have and will result in the occurrence of more natural disasters. We in Fiji experienced unprecedented floods in February of this year. The enormous devastation caused by such disasters not only results in commercial and economic hardships but has a deleterious effect on food production.

Mr. Chairman the ill effects of climate change can still be minimised. It is therefore imperative that Copenhagen is a success. It is imperative that we view food security and world hunger not just as a problem for individual countries or individual regions – Like climate change it is a global phenomenon; like climate change there are some countries that need to take more responsibility than others; like climate the measures adopted must recognise that there are those that have more to give and indeed must do so; like climate change the global system of how we interact and do business must be restructured.

After all it is the recognition of the differences that exist today that will help us to forge a just and sustainable world of tomorrow.

Mr Chairman, the whole world is watching us as we once again take to the stage to deliberate and make commitments. As I recently said in Fiji, policy statements should not simply become a wish list, rather it must be supported with practical changes and it must be actioned.

Mr Chairman, these deliberations must lead to practical, tangible and new solutions that are expeditiously implemented.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.

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