

39th session of the FAO Conference

Statement by Mrs. O'Love Tauveve Jacobsen,

High Commissioner of Niue in New Zealand

10 June 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Please ponder on this for a while.

*The time is near
When the oceans that feeds
Will bury us
The lands that nourish us
Will starve us
The forests that breathe for us
Will suffocate us*

*The time is near or is it too late
How much monies can save us now
Communiqués, frameworks, actions
All take time
Too small, too few, too far to see
So what do you think we will be
Not SIDS says I
But SIR – Small Island Refugees*

I stand before you as a representative of the smallest island developing state – the rock of Polynesia called Niue. The largest raised coral atoll in the world, limestone in nature, soil porous and poor.

1,700 people live there, while some 30,000 live abroad, mainly in New Zealand and Australia. Climate change has taken its toll.

It was purposeful that SIDS was held in Samoa to claim the seriousness of the effects and impact of climate change in the Pacific.

FAO re-energized its mandate on climate change alongside food security and nutrition. We witnessed FAO's commitment at the SIDS Side Event.

Our homes sit on 60% of the world's surface waters neatly divided into three sub regions: Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. Vast population sizes, huge social, cultural and economic differences.

FAO Headquarters is on the top half of the world, too far to visualize what's going on down South.

The plight for the Pacific people in the South West Pacific region for a seat on the Council started in 2007. We need to be here in FAO to relate our stories, and who can tell it better but ourselves. To this end, I respectfully ask the Conference, not for your sympathy, but for your understanding. When the Pacific requests its entitlement of seats to the FAO Council, as per its Constitution, please assist and support us.

As I draw near my statement to an end, allow me to place Niue's vote of thanks and a vote of confidence for the work of FAO under the leadership of the Director-General.

During his term, we were granted with technical assistance projects, such as the newly established food processing facility for agricultural products in 2014, as well as TeleFood initiatives that brings a direct benefit to the people in the communities.

For all those things and many more, I salute you, Director-General, and your team of experts.

Please don't frown on us if we ask too often for FAO's assistance. But you are our leader, Director-General. You are a good leader because we have confidence in you, but importantly you are a great leader because you empower us with the confidence through the work of FAO.

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for your leadership in this 39th session of FAO Conference. You make me proud to be a Pacific person. And for that, I will tribute you and FAO with this:

Now is the hour for me to say goodbye, soon I'll be leaving to my home afar...

Haere ra FAO Haere ra

When I return, I'll find you waiting here.